ノーゲーム・ノーライフ 7

NO GAME NO LIFE

ゲーマー兄妹たちは定石（せかい）を覆すそうです

著／イラスト◎榎宮祐

No Game No Life Volume 7

It Seems the Gamer Siblings Will Overturn Common Sense(the World)

Theoretical Start

——Let’s try to imagine.

Right now, you are playing an online match of a certain First Person Shooter (FPS) game.

You are standing on a place where you can overlook pretty far over the carefully built-up stage.

It’s atop a small hill where you can have a panoramic view of an elegant scenery, such as the group of small fries firing at each other with guns.

You can’t help but say, “People are looking like trash,” with a [sniper rifle] in your hands.

I want to reassure those who don’t know how to handle a firearm nor the way to use it.

Just like how it’s written, it’s a [gun(rifle)] made for the sake of ‘sniping’.

If you take [sniping] from the dictionary, it’ll be expressed as “targeting and shooting from a long distance.”

If it’s about a gun made to fire randomly while [charging] in, then it’ll be expressed as an [assault gun(rifle)].

As such, no matter how you think about it, it’s a gun made to target and shoot from a long distance.

That’s right, it’s a gun so you can unilaterally shoot those small fries you see below you——

Come on! Since you’ve already finished confirming that, slowly lower your body and prepare the rifle!

Now! Let’s try to lightly shoot away, like, about twenty or thirty of those heads reflected in the scope!

If you do that, then, certainly soon, the thunderous applause will reach you!!

——Saying things like [Bite the dust and drop dead!] or [Read the mood, you beginner(Noob)!], and a lot of the likes……

A surreal amount of widely varied, rage-filled verbal insults will reach you, that is.

——What happened? When you sniped with the sniper rifle, you got scolded——that was all.

So, you don’t get it, do you? Are you thinking that it’s unreasonable?

Coincidentally, a young boy, who was pure and innocent at the time, though of the exact same thing:

[What the hell……] he returned while tapping dismayed on the keyboard.

——But, unfortunately, *there was nothing unreasonable* about this story.

There was someone who opposed the [standard], and he was simply criticized like it was natural, that was all.

——In all games, there was an [established tactic].

That was something existing above specifications and rules; it was the [best move] that was logically optimized.

In games, it was the equivalence to an absolute and inviolable common knowledge(manner)——and *besides.*

——What would happen if you openly oppose it and thoughtlessly challenge it? The answer was…… *this.*

The young boy who had once received the abusive language——who was now a young man.

Today, once again, while running around inside the game, holding a rifle…… he thought.

Indeed. Certainly, confining yourself and waiting while only sniping is an effective tactic.

But, if everyone thinks that, confine themselves and keep to sniping——the game won't be established.

Just like how passing the ball endlessly to allies in soccer isn't a violation of the rules.

Just like how moving a piece randomly and endlessly in chess isn't a violation of the rules.

But, since it's a player versus player battle, you'll be frowned upon if they do that——such an implicit understanding exists.

——If everyone wants to gain something(have fun), they'll refrain from doing it as much as they can…… Such [common sense] exists.

If one openly opposes it, it's only natural for them to get hit, so it'll also be natural if they get insulted, right——!?

Courtesy, etiquette, those are important for a person. Shooting a dead body? That's no good, absolutely.

…… Or something like that. It's a "do it that way" or "be like this."

It was something that would make sense if you were raised decently——that kind of [common sense(sophism)].

But, for the young man who grew up useless, he was a textbook example of(hikikomori) a no good(NEET) human(gamer) that will make one feel ashamed of him no matter where one takes him to.

——*Then, why is it that sniper rifles are implemented?*

Sticking his tongue out mockingly, he once again, grabbed the sniper rifle and scattered claymores and sentry guns.

Smiling amid the defamation, he ran around vigorously and, after changing positions, he resumed his confining.

I don't want to know about the intermediate players those [common sense(brats)] are, thinking a game won't be established with something of this level.

——In the first place, that [standard] was.

It was a move that the weak had knitted to win against the strong——it's a [strategy] and——!

——Then, the expert player(strong)'s knife, who followed him after breaking through the traps the young man had laid down and even evaded his sniping……

…………Eh~ what was it? Right, then! That [common sense] is!

Until the very end, it's just something that's ***destined to be broken!***

Just like this——gazing at the opponent who took one kill from him, the young man laughed with blank eyes.

[Not half bad, huh, damn you're so cool], he sent out such a message.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——In all games, there was an [established tactic].

That was something existing above specification and rules; it was the [best move] that was logically optimized.

In a world where everything was decided by games, it's the equivalence to an absolute and inviolable common knowledge(theory)——and *besides.*

——What will happen if you openly oppose it and thoughtlessly challenge it? The answer was…… *this.*

Over sixty years ago——on the frontier of a hill, which would eventually be called the [Eastern Union].

A small, golden fox girl looked up to the sky with limp eyes and thought.

In the sky painted with shades of night——at its end, something reflected as if trying to interrupt the red moon's writing.

It was giant chess piece that could be seen from anywhere on the planet, extending as if to pierce the sky, while dropping its form to the earth.

Over six thousand years ago, the god on its summit was said to have listed the [Ten Oaths] ——exalted and said.

——That the world has changed.

But, the girl, with her clouded golden eyes, thought.

——***You big liar.***

The Great War had met its end, the wars disappeared, and rights were guaranteed.

There was no need to suffer and fear violence anymore.

——*It was a lie.*

It was a lie, everything, all of it was a big lie——!

If wars disappeared, then why are we(the Werebeasts) are continuing this civil war(game)!?

If rights were guaranteed, then why are we are(I am) having everything being stolen from us!?

If the need to fear violence and suffering disappeared, then——why——

——*Why am I bearing wounds, fearing violence, and suffering in pain?*

Tears fell from the girl clad in bloodstained, tattered clothes, as if she begged for an answer.

The shape of the tail and the ears, the presence or absence of angles, the color of the fur: their differences formed the herds, who then mocked each other.

If another race was to exploit the Werebeasts, then the other part of the race would say “Serves you right” and be pleased by it.

Holding onto such [common sense(theories)], the Werebeasts continued the [Civil War(game)] for over six thousand years.

——*This is wrong. Let’s stop this cat fight between fellow Werebeasts and help each other out.*

But, if the young——and therefore, wise girl, were to disagree with the common knowledge(theory) using such sensibilities.

“Weaklings(A piece) shouldn’t run their mouths off.”——She would be crushed with measly malice, just like that.

And above the nameless hill, the collapsed girl while covered in blood, with her right to die or kill stolen from her.

She glared at the giant chess piece with her faint consciousness——she finally understood.

——*The [Ten Oaths] says, don’t steal without permission, don’t violate, don’t* *kill.*

But, that wasn't something to protect the weak, much less something that allowed weakness.

Deceive, measure, threaten——no matter what methods you have to use——

***After making them consent,** beat, steal, violate and kill——That was what it was all about.*

You live if you are strong, you die if you are weak.

If you win, you get everything, if you lose, you lose everything.

Being correct or not didn't matter, the loser wasn't allowed even the right to complain.

If you don't like it, then, become the strong(player), not the weakling(piece), they say.

If you conspire unscrupulously with everything you have, you will be able to do whatever you want with the rights of others——become the Sole Representative(Ruler).

——Yes, what the [Ten Oaths(Rules)] the one called the Sole God had listed on the continent, was that.

With your hand, instead of taking someone else's hands——it's better to punch them.

With your power, instead of becoming a shield for the weak——it's better to dominate them.

*I see, the [standard(theory)]——If you're seeking your own interest(the optimal), then it's better to rule over others **as much as you can.***

By bringing up such a rule, that's so lacking in communication——did the world change?

*Nothing had changed…… What happened was simply that **the procedure required to kill and steal merely increased by one.***

The girl finally understood that despair(reality), but——she laughed.

——That [standard] was a move that the weak had knitted to win against the strong——it's a [strategy].

*And, those things are, until the very end——nothing but things **destined to be broken!***

Even the inevitable thing called [common sense(theory)] isn't an exception, she thought while holding back the nausea caused by that unscrupulous thing.

Then, the girl said while silencing her body which screamed in pain——*that [common sense(theory)].*

————*I'll definitely break it,* and stood up.

I'll overturn this vicious common sense——I'll definitely knit the [standard breaker].

That [standard breaker], too, will be something destined to be broken——but, ***that's fine.***

No matter how many times, no matter how many infinite times I have to do it, somewhere at the end of that broken [standard], which would continue getting broken.

——It should exist.

With your hand, instead of punching someone——it'll be better to take their hands, such a [standard].

With your power, instead of dominating the weak——it'll be better to become their shield, such a [standard].

It doesn't matter what they are, they aren't a mere weakling(piece) that exists just to be dominated by someone.

It will be better for everyone if they are their own Sole Representatives(Players), such a [standard].

I'll probably find it——No, I'll definitely find it——

——And so, on that day, at that moment.

Looking down on the [standard]——Glaring at the one who enacted and forced upon her that inevitability, the girl made her decision.

If openly opposing it and, in turn, being defeated is the [standard], then ***let's cunningly oppose it.***

Let's deceive, measure, and threaten even more insidiously, even more despicably, thoroughly unscrupulously, and without end!

——No matter what methods I have to use; I'll definitely manage to do it.

Something even the One Sole God who arrogantly exaggerated he had changed the world, couldn't do.

We'll definitely, by ourselves, and with these hands——change the world.

Yes——an extraordinary dream which only a preposterous child is allowed to see held in her chest.

Once in the past, above the nameless hill, below the nameless shrine, the nameless golden fox girl thought.

Just like the one at the top of that piece wishes, I'll use ***everything that is allowed by the rules.***

Laughing at that, she made a move that would overturn every [common sense] ——In other words.

————She executed an unprecedented and unrivaled [*Great Cheat*].

Then, a [storm] was born——one overturning and eradicated the approximately 6,200-year-old Civil War.

Anger and hatred, ill feelings and ties, the unquestionable and irrefutable storm gathered and stole everything, then left.

The storm even stole the room for conflict rooted in the ones who never got tired of stealing from others before leaving——In its place.

——A single [country] was born.

A country embodying one end of that dream——of the absurd ideal that the girl once had in the past.

The name, in a mere half a century reached and became known through many of the big countries of the world, was——the Eastern Union.

……The young golden fox was no longer there.

She became known as [Miko], an existence that was feared by all Werebeasts.

And so, the [*Cheat*] she had devised since her younger days was, right now ——

"Well, now~ then, how about we start this game already, o bothersome *god?*"

Once where nameless golden fox had collapsed, on the nameless hill, at the nameless shrine.

Now, Eastern Union, in the capital, Kannagari——on the land called [the Temple of the Priestess(Miyashiro)].

Before the eyes of everyone gathered at that place.

The [cheat] called god——swirled its pure and enormous "power" …………

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

[Your words(nonsense), certainly I have heard them. As such, you may prove yourselves——but]

——That which moved Miko's lips and spun words out wasn't Miko said so.

That overcame the temple, no the capital, Kannagari——even the ocean.

Let alone the Eastern Union, it seemed to engulf even Elkia, this storm of power's source.

It was the *cheat* that Miko harbored within her in her younger days——[Quintessence].

The one who held that will(power) spoke through Miko's body, which now became a puppet.

[I cannot understand the folly wishes of wanting to *rush to your deaths,* mortals who await an unavoidable death.]

Miko, who was harboring the Old Deus, looked at the ones who stood lined up in her hazy consciousness.

Rushing to death——she looked at the ones who challenged a [god] speaking like so to a match(game)——the seven faces.

“Roll call! First, Sora, 18 years old, virgin! Let’s coolly answer that I’m *hastening my life!”*

The young black-haired Imanity(man)——Sora yelled while distorting one end of his mouth and seemed aloof.

He kept laughing at the swirling divine pressure, while holding up his hand as if the wind was only annoying.

“I can play with an Old Deus(god), you know? If I were to let this chance go, I’d definitely fail as a gamer.”

“……Second, Shiro, 11 years old…… Next, we don’t have…… too much time…… to keep waiting……”

His little sister, Shiro——perhaps she gave up as her long, white hair was left disheveled while she continued with her eyes half closed.

“Eh, eeeeeeh!? T-Third, Stephanie Dola don’t want to die I decisively refuse it so——”

“Fourth, Sora-sama and Shiro-sama’s unworthy slave, Jibril. More importantly, I was about to let a [Heavenly Strike(tear)] fall for being ignored as the only one who’s not a [mortal]——I order you to *correct yourself*❤”

The precious source of common sense——the Imanity girl, Steph, was screaming in grief with teary eyes.

The Flügel girl, Jibril, interrupted with a dangerous smile and was giving orders to a god.

“Fifth~ Plum, also renowned as part of air, will act accordingly by reading the mood and going with the flow……”

The one who raised her own name to follow was a Dhampir girl——correction, a boy called Plum.

On the face showed signs of a beautiful girl suffering from misfortune, a dry smile of resignation can be seen as he answered. And——

“……? S-Sixth, desu? Izuna——heeeh”

The Werebeast girl, Izuna Hatsuse, trying to follow the flow, continued while feeling puzzled——

She knelt down together with Ino Hatsuse, the elder Werebeast man who had pressed down on her head.

“Please be at ease, Miko-sama.”

He lowered his head and said so but, it wasn’t directed at the Old Deus, it was towards the sealed Miko.

"They're a bunch hardly worthy of trust——but, that's exactly why, please leave it to us."

"Ah, we will d-definitely beat up——win against that arrogant god, desu."

While Izuna tried to imitate her grandfather's gestures to smooth things over, her fighting spirit still leaked out as she spoke.

——Those were the seven people.

Each of them seemed to be unrelated to their sense of tension and lacked any element of reliability.

Each one carried a huge baggage on their backs; their age, race, and even gender were all unrelated.

They were a lovely bunch of fools who came out to do something as reckless as challenging a "god".

So that they could overturn the absolute justice known as [common sense] ——which consists of the order(rules) established by the One Sole God.

——Doing it not as a mere piece(prayer), but, as someone of equal standing(a player).

Miko smiled bitterly inside her consciousness while remembering even the loveliness of that view.

But, at the same time she thought——for the current *her,* it was something incomprehensible.

[——Then you may pledge. With those words, acknowledge your own deaths in this worthless play.]

The Old Deus had plainly pressed them to announce the pledge that will result in their own ruin, but——

"Ah, before that, can I ask one thing?"

Sora suddenly raised his voice, as if he just remembered; it was so relaxed, it seemed out of place.

While interrupting his comrades who raised their hands to announce the start of the game——he asked.

"Your name, I still haven't gotten to hear it, you see?"

[——Why do you want to know of it, lowermost existence?]

"Eh? For an opponent I'll be beating the crap out of and making them lose, remembering their name at least is the least amount of courtesy, right?"

——The shock made the atmosphere groan.

Everyone at that place——even the Flügel, Jibril, flinched at the god's displeasure.

If the [Ten Oaths] didn't exist, everything would have been annihilated just by that overwhelming pressure.

Miko broke into a laugh at such a fact. It's been over half a century since she harbored the [Quintessence].

Was there ever a time *she* displayed this much "displeasure"? ——Even more so

"……Eh, hold——did I say something that would especially offend her?"

Just like breathing, he didn't realize what he was doing——by an insignificant Imanity's frivolous talk.

"……Nii, it's alright, you…… didn't say anything…… special……"

"I-Isn't that so!? Because, I didn't really have any intention like that at——"

Seeing the appalled Sora, Shiro declared with a smile while raising her thumb.

"Nii…… because…… just by breathing…… you make people…… furious."

"A-As expected of Master! To think you would try to make the god 'die of anger', what patience——!!"

"With this, it proved there are people who would approach a god just to punch him…… how admirable."

"Really, how about we stop with the games and use the violence of words to kill a god? If it's Sora-sama, then he may be able to pull it off."

"……Sora, really dangerous, desu……"

"Shitty monkey…… bastard, do you have an illness where you'll die if you get serious even for a moment……?"

Miko secretly let out a smile in her hazy consciousness, seeing their figures making a fuss full of harmony.

At the same time, inside her thoughts that seemed about to be cut off——she saw.

In one of the gazes, the god, not waiting for the words of the pledge anymore, began creating the game board.

The Temple of the Priestess(Miyashiro)——expanding from there, the Kannagari's skyscraper then, the cities on the various islands of the Eastern Union……

Overseeing the homeland that took her entire life to lay down——she thought.

——In the past, the nameless golden fox girl saw a dream.

A dream she saw while repeatedly breaking down [common sense] ——in the country she built while seeking what existed beyond it.

——But, that girl(child) from the past doesn't exist anymore.

Miko, the girl who *became* an adult on a certain day…… she ended up noticing.

The [standard breaker] …… *clearly had an end.*

The game she kept researching until she knew everything about it reached the point where *the first to move wins* just like those quiz games.

No matter how much the weaklings(pieces) struggle, they definitely won't be able to jump out of the board.

——"The one who challenges(Player)", and "the one who prays(Prayer)".

No matter where you go in this world, it's the same board where the strong(players) have fun using the weak(prayers) as the piece.

That [common sense] alone——couldn't be overturned.

And it was none other than the [cheat] the girl executed in her younger days that had proved it.

That had filled Miko with resignation and disappointment, but——

Lowering her view, her consciousness returned to the inner garden of the temple.

Over there was a view even the girl of the past couldn't have dreamed of.

Imanity, Flügel, Dhampir, Werebeast——

In ancient times, they're the ones who killed each other through force. Now, with another method(games), they steal and despise each other.

The representatives of those races whose power and lifespan, even their existences differed, have now met under one roof, laughing together.

Even more so when all of them, though their intentions are different, have the same objective——

They're harmoniously laughing under the foolish action, "challenge an Old Deus", something far from sanity……

"——Seriously, it's really fine, isn't it?"

Was it due to being too angry, or was it because she was concentrating on her work?

At a certain time, the god's control over her body loosened and, obeying Miko's consciousness, she asked that question.

"——My error, the mistake I committed at that time——will you correct it?"

Miko slowly extended her hand mid-air.

After fluttering her white arm, a shining [Pawn] rested in the palm of her hand.

That was unmistakably a [Race Piece] ——the Werebeast's piece.

Correct the "mistake of that day" ——to settle the accumulating bill since that day.

If I don't do that, then, I'm not qualified to laugh together with them.

But, if I can do it, then at that time for sure——

"If you desire so…… then the Eastern Union——the Werebeasts, will walk alongside you guys."

——said Miko, who continued to be troubled and distressed…… but.

"Hmm…… honestly, I don't really understand what mistake Miko-san did and is getting all serious about now."

The man suspected of having an illness where he would die if he got serious ——stated imposingly.

"If you're talking about correcting, then, how about we start correcting the *mistake* of making us get serious!?"

As the one challenging an Old Deus no different from the universe itself——he shouted while "rejecting the seriousness."

All while not knowing Miko's worries and distress——or was it exactly because he knew it?

The siblings(two) declared, with eyes exactly like those of a child itself brightening with *expectation.*

"We're really lucky! We're blessed with a chance to play a game against an Old Deus(a god) with these members!!"

"……And…… if we're going to play a game, then…… of course, we will win…… as such——"

"Obviously! Quite naturally and inevitably! The Elkia Federation(We) will get both the Eastern Union, the Old Deus and various other things with it!! There's nothing else besides that——easy to understand, right?"

——*You really think of things that get adults pissed off, huh,* she thought with a childish face indulging in deep emotions.

What was now certainly being reflected in Miko's eyes was something that long since stopped being reflected in it.

"Let's put those troublesome things aside. This world(This)——is a 'game,' you know?"

He spoke with an *intense* will——the two pairs of eyes only harbored a joyful color in it.

"This is a match to stupidly compete on just how serious(annoying) we can get about such worthless things, right?"

"……That's why…… for us to lose is…… something…… *impossible."*

"It's a play to decide the stupidest one——there's no reason for us to lose in a 'stupidity match' against god at all."

——It was a [play(game)] just that simple.

Both the strong(player) and the weak(piece), they simply challenge and get challenged back——It's just a hindsight.

Be it "the one who challenges(Players)" or "the one who prays(Prayers)"——it's all about just *how do you want to be it.*

If the game you've been researching ends up reaching to the point of where *the first to move wins,* then.

This time——what will start will just be a game deciding *who will take the first move.*

With a single straightforward logic(weapon), he dismissed Miko's imprudent despair.

Looking at the ones who exalted the end was, in truth, endless, together they propagated their passion.

"……I don't want to admit it, but…… I'm also getting 'old,' you know……"

Feeling amused, Miko suddenly thought.

Surely it must be reflected in Sora and Shiro(those two)'s eyes——the "simple world," even though it didn't look like it in my younger days.

That was something only allowed to be seen by children, so what if I hadn't really seen it?

If the world is, in truth, just like how these two are saying, something just that simple then——

What if we are(everyone is) ***simply making it look complicated——****?*

"————Really, I'm counting on you."

With the words that fell together with her bitter smile, each of the fools challenging a god showed their own smile.

Just as they desired and expected, it was something so simple, so easy.

Something to decide who was the stupidest one, an easily understandable——

"Now————Let the games begin——!!"

Sora shouted joyfully the same time Miko threw up the Werebeast's piece.

High, high above the head——towards the piece thrown up as it reached the Old Deus, swirling high into the sky.

Everyone also raised their arms, as if trying to pierce through the narrow inner garden——

————【Aschente】————!!

The shouting of the pledge echoed, starting the game that would absolutely adhere to the [Ten Oaths].

The declaration that they would obey the rules established by the Sole God(Liar), exaggerating the world had changed, was the signal.

The accumulated, wriggling power in that place breached out.

Within the consciousness at the mercy of the turbulent power surging like a tsunami——Miko thought.

——The world hadn't changed at all.

The girl, during her younger days once thought to definitely change it with her hands, yearned for a dream.

The dream I unconsciously woke up from when I became an adult, let's once again immerse in it, Miko thought.

——*In this game. In the Old Deus.* ***In her.*** *In the moment we can prove that we won.*

Now, for once, the world should change——at that time alone…… yes, I'll recognize it.

His words when he listed the oaths, in the far away past on the day the Great War ended, weren't a lie.

That the world can be changed——in the changed world, certainly that has changed——!!

——*That's why.*

(…… I still won't apologize yet…… self-proclaimed Sole God-han……)

——*Were you just a liar, or was I just a fool?*

The moment that answer comes out, just a little bit——I'll apologize.

For calling you a terrible liar too many times…… Yes, I'll do it [patiently], she thought while slightly extending out her tongue——

Leaving behind such expectation and sarcasm, Miko's consciousness got washed away to beyond the light.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——That phenomenon was witnessed by everyone around the world.

“Recreation” ——through the [power] born on an island floating in the Far East’s ocean.

It occurred in a blink of the eye, and although inexplicably, it was even witnessed at the backside of the planet.

Like the distorted planet couldn’t help but let its screams be known throughout the heavens and earth——

——The darkness of the night was broken, and the light of day was torn off.

That irreverent, absurd, and unreasonable power shook even the planet itself.

The power became waves, the waves turned into substance(shape), concept was defined and then revealed.

Imitating the universe’s beginning, through the divine feat replicating heaven and earth’s creation——a land was born *in the sky*.

The land born in midair spun successively and, eventually, became a spiral made by a single ray.

The vortex swirled and a tower reaching to the moon was built——it became a celestial corridor.

——Even if they weren’t able to understand what was happening, their trembling instincts were enough.

——Those who, unfortunately, were able to understand it too, were forced by their rationality to fold their knees and tremble.

Just who was the existence(one) executing such a [miracle] that defied reason?

Their blood, soul, even their existence itself seemed to be chopped down, not fading even when it overlapped eternally——their fear(memory) answered.

Towards the one who, in the past, defined the entire universe, created the heavens and broke down the earth——their dread(memory) spoke.

That was why everyone who witnessed that phenomenon did something that day.

Without having anything else they could’ve done, or should’ve done, besides *that*——In other words.

Praying “Aah…… God,” ——besides that, there was nothing else……

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——There was a single person at the summit of the giant chess piece at the end of the world.

A true and genuine “god” ——the Sole God(Tet), who supervised everything of this world was——

“*Achoo* *Ah-choo* *sniff* …… I’m really being called a lot today, huh, even though it’s not my doing.”

He was rubbing his red nose while holding a trash can that was filled with tissues.

The only unnecessary things that were produced even by a god are snot and complaints.

“……Being called ‘liar, liar’ continuously…… Is there anything crueler than those harmful rumors?”

——*I’m about to cry, you know?*

Tet was seeing the new land that was born in the heavens, while flapping his legs discontentedly.

It was a continent expanding big enough to completely cover up all the land from the Eastern Union to Elkia.

It was a vast game board one of the Old Deus had assembled temporarily, but ——

“Haha☆ This may be a little unexpected. So, you like those pretty and flashy things, huh?”

Even for an Old Deus, you’re using your power too flashily, you know, towards such *murmur* Tet had spilled out
——no.

【——Question. The work from this time, is it of your doing? ——Holder of the [Star Grail(Sunny Aster)] 】

Towards his *calling,* a voice echoed from the void answered.

It was extremely difficult to do something like speaking to the Sole God(Tet), even with the power of an Old Deus, and yet——

“*‘I’m not anyone’s ally’*——I wonder how many times I have to say it so you’d understand…… *achoo*!”

Replay properly when you’re being talked to by “the Sole God(me),” alright♪

Tet was trying to be irreverent, but, with a completely aloof smile, he tossed away another tissue into the trash can.

【——False. The one who summoned *us* from the other world was you. *Your participation,* disclose that intent. 】

If this world(game) was a contest of Race Pieces for the Old Deus, who were fighting each other to earn the right to challenge the Sole God, then.

Just what did the “participation” of the Sole God himself meant——the voice asked so, but, Tet promptly laughed at it.

——There was no such weight behind it. If he really had to say something, there was only *expectation*——

"How about this 'intent' then: It's because I want to see your roaring faces, since you are ruining the game with *that misunderstanding*☆"

Despite the childishness he answered with, it was Tet's unfeigned true feelings——It was only *expectation.*

But, the voice of the of the Old Deus resounding from the void continued indifferently.

【——If there were to have such a convergence, then the [Star Grail(Sunny Aster)] should know.】

"…… 'If you want to see my face, then look at the future'…… Can't you put it in a simpler way like that?"

Smiling wryly, Tet fluttered the palm of his hand in the air.

"I'm bragging, but, unlike you guys——I have good taste."

Floating in his hand was the proof of the Sole God.

"To the point I decided to make it my principle to not look at the future(spoilers)——see♪"

——[Star Grail(Sunny Aster)].

It was a device with the concept of absolute supremacy——a vessel where the "omnipotent power" had settled.

It could even be said the existing power of this universe was nothing but a mere fragment that spilled out and fell from the vessel.

For the person(Tet) freely controlling it, originally, time and even the metaphysical cause and effect——was already meaningless.

Both creation and destruction, past and future, even observation and definition, it was all as he pleases.

"To see the future where the Old Deus will make a roaring face" ——*creating* such a future would also be pretty easy, but——

"Is it fun to cheat like that? Looking at the future, *was there anything good there?*"

——Even if it wasn't as much as Tet, who possessed the [Star Grail(Sunny Aster)].

If you're an Old Deus, then you should be able to see the future to a certain point, right, he laughed with sarcasm.

"——I don't look at anything besides the past."

With a single murmur, he made the trash can disappear and brought up a single book and feather pen.

That book, which God had bundled and wrote, was still occupied majorly by blank pages.

"That's why I'm excited, wanting to write this game's result——This continuation, you see."

It was the future expected by the God who rejected omniscience.

It was a story that still didn't exist——which recorded a myth not even God knew.

…………

Tet let out a wry smile at the silence essentially to measure his real intention. There was no way "she" would accept Tet's words as true.

——That [Quintessence] definitely wouldn't allow it to be accepted as true.

【——Did you call me out for such 'nonsense'?】

"Hm~ alright. The mockery and instigation were, to the bitter end, just a bo~nus☆ The main issue is, you see——"

Yes, together with a wry smile, Tet pointed at the blank page.

"Your name is *unknown even* to the [Star Grail(Sunny Aster)] you see, so teach me? Because I can't write it here otherwise——"

——He had said so, but, maybe it was because he rejected omniscience.

Tet laughed without even noticing he was pretty much saying the *main issue was also an instigation*——

————*kshh*

The communication was severed, leaving behind the annoying sound of space cracking.

"……Uwah…… To pull out the entire circuit altogether…… As a gamer, I wonder about that?"

Letting out a sigh, Tet let the feather pen fall to the book in his hands.

On one side, there are people who think the world is so simple even children can understand it.

On one side, there are people who think the world is so complex and strange, it's meaningless since it'll never be understood.

On one side, there are people who think the world hasn't changed and will never change.

On one side, there are people who think the world keeps changing and is trying to change even now.

——*Both in the past and in the present, too, it was true for the people, machines, beasts——gods……*

Was it truly only one of them or could it be that——

Tet covered his face, as if to answer all and every question.

He thought, alone, about the fact that makes everyone skeptical——as if complaining it wasn't a lie.

——On that really, really distant day, the world really changed, you know.

When the God of Play(1) held the [Star Grail(Sunny Aster)], certainly——with those hands, it changed, you know.

Turning the heavens and the earth into a game board, the laws into rules…… certainly, it changed.

But, even if the heavens and earth change, there are things that won't change, that shouldn't be changed.

I cannot change even the ones who live(players) in this world(game); it's something I must not change.

Just like how the will of the Old Myth(those two) gave birth to me, to the [Star Grail(Sunny Aster)], the world——To change.

The ones who live(players) in this world must wish for it to change, you know.

"——You guys will change it, right!? You will overturn 'everything' until you come here, right!?"

The will of the New Myth(these two) this time, will change even the players(everything).

Surely that——will be pushy, maybe even a nuisance, while asking no questions.

Dragging around everything, with a method just like that of the worst kind of ill-mannered child——

No matter who it is——he will surely be *cornered to the point where he has no choice but to change.*

——At that time.

Finally, the world above the board(game) will start in its true meaning.

Surely an interesting game ever since the creation of the universe——*has finally started.*

Tet lowered his legs and crossed it, while waiting from the depths of his heart for the moment it'll get recorded in past tense, just like that.

"……You too, I'm looking forward to calling you by your name the next time we meet, alright?"

——The only one in this world.

Tet knew what the one distorting the world in front of his eyes——the [Quintessence] Miko harbored had said.

"For it was none other than you, who created that machine with a heart(child) …… yet, for you to be making such a face, that's——"

……After swallowing his next words, he forcibly…… tried smiling.

He simply gazed at the enormously constructed game board which shook the heavens and the earth.

He deeply gazed at it as if to not let a single hand and foot movement from the ones reaching the Newest Myth escape——

And, no matter what match(game) you are observing, you should cheer for them, right?

Cheering for your favorite player is good, but, it's also hard to throw away a surprising upset.

Who should I cheer for——Though, the Sole God pondered like that, he soon raised his face.

As if he was materializing the real nature of the world he created with his hands——

"Do your best, every~one♪ I'm cheering for mostly everyone, alright~ Ahaha☆"

……He threw out an air looking so relaxed as if it was appropriate as an end.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——*Awaken.*

Sora opened his eyes at the words that pierced through his slumber.

Raising his body as if detaching it from the ground, his eyes wavered dreamily, due to not being fully awake——

……Haha, now this is a splendid situation discernment even for myself, Sora laughed while praising himself.

After taking a quivering look around, with just that single glance he uncovered——*two problems.*

Sora thought with his head completely calm, categorizing it in order of severity to priority.

——The [First Problem] was a matter of concern.

A change to the Committee of 300——the Official Bishoujo[1] Rankings inside Sora's brain——In other words.

It was about the matter of "there was an incredibly cute girl" in the wandering gaze earlier.

Sitting atop of a floating ink pot the size of their height while supporting their cheeks was——a young girl.

Dressed in elegant, oriental clothing——though with a different style from the Eastern Union's, she was holding a paint brush in her hands.

With countless scrolls spread on her back like wings or a veil, she looked down with her silver-colored eyes——no.

With fake, enigmatic eyes seeming to hold no interest towards anything, it vacantly followed something(somewhere) not here(this place).

As if she was a puppet——but, Sora almost had his eyes forcibly stolen by that god-like beauty.

For Sora, who had *gotten tired of seeing only beautiful girls,* this was a serious matter of concern.

……You're completely right if you say 'what the hell are you saying, even though you're just a virgin!'——but!!

Each and every single girl I've ever met since I came to this world(Disboard)—— they don't know moderation.

A princess that would lead idols to an inevitable public execution if they were to stand near her, an angel that would make top models sink into an inferiority complex, a young girl with animal ears that's awakening to her loli attribute as an assist for a one-way arrest route for criminals——be it this one or that one, they're all like that.

I'm still updating my history of being without a girlfriend, though!

That's why for the current Sora, who's *just* used to women, a mere bishoujo won't be enough to distress him.

——He dropped the assignment while thinking *I also had a time when I thought like that~*

The girl in front of him was trying to join the rankings right after immobile Committee Member [Number One(Shiro)]——and so.

Noticing it concerned the next problem, Sora decided to think about that one for now.

That being said, the [Second Problem] wasn't much of a problem.

After all, it was something that would be solved when asked——In other words.

"……Erm……? Where is this, who is this girl, and what am I doing here?"

——In other words, it was about the matter that "he had no memories(answers)".

……………………

——Sora reflected on the priority of the problems while clenching his teeth.

It's wrong, right——! Normally, you would think about this one first!!

What was that about incredible situation discernment, you fool!! This way ——

If I don't know the name of ***Provisional Number Two-san,*** *I can't add her to the rankings, right, idiot————!!*

"…………Mm…… Nii……? ……Where is this……?"

After looking up at the sunset, Sora heard Number One(Shiro)-san murmuring with sleepy eyes.

——Letting out a small "hmm", he looked around the surroundings again.

Just like them, those down on the ground were waking up successively.

Jibril, Steph, Plum, Izuna, Ino——

But, after seeing them all look around with troubled faces——Sora confirmed it once more.

It seems the [Second Problem] won't be solved even if he asked someone.

Because no one seems to have those memories is what he thought, but……

"——Mm~…… Well, I don't know, but, there's probably no problem"

Since it won't change the fact it's a problem we can't do anything about, Sora quietly answered.

Taking Shiro's hand and helping her up, he looked over at [Provisional Number Two-san] before him.

——Even if he didn't know *who* she was, it was obvious *what* she was.

That fear of suffering an unnatural death, like facing a heavy caliber gun, like from the time he first met Jibril.

But, "there wasn't even that" in the girl floating before him.

Sora thought people must become like this when faced with things like tornadoes and tsunamis.

There wasn't any despair nor the fear of death. There was only daze and simply——[resignation].

It didn't even allow the thought of resisting, as the sensation coming from an existence embodying one's breath of nature(the world) clearly answered.

——This was a [god].

It was the manifestation of All Things in Creation, the peak of the Sixteen Races(Exceed), Rank Number One——Old Deus.

——*But, if that's it, then, it's a simple story, right,* Sora exaggeratedly said.

"Where is this? It's *inside the game!!* What are you doing? *You are playing the game!!* That is all!"

As for where this place is, it's a place they knew——that's right, it's in the *past tense*.

It was supposed to be within the Eastern Union, at the Temple of the Priestess' Inner Garden——but now, there were seven doors casually built there.

And if they look up above their heads, there was an enormous land floating as if to cover the sky.

——I see, there's no memories about starting that kind of game.

But, there are memories up to leaving Elkia to challenge the Old Deus.

So, did the game with the Old Deus start with [memory deprivation] in the rules? ——Anyway, there's no problem.

"N-Not even once have I looked down upon Master, but, isn't it about time to remember dread——"

"……It's incredible how you can remain nonchalant in front of an Old Deus…… Where does that confidence come from?"

An iridescent voice flew towards Sora, who frolicked like a child in a typhoon, but he was smiling bitterly.

A transcendental existence beyond the understanding of a mere human, surpassing both despair and fear——!!

Uwah, what a fearsome thing……!!

——But, going by the "mere human" that was Sora——he *couldn't feel anything.*

What would a native from Earth do when facing natural calamities like tornadoes and tsunamis?

Take out a cell phone to take a photo and spread it on the net, like a duty.

As such, Sora approached Provisional Number Two-san, aiming for a low-angle shot of the one estimated to be a god——

But the Old Deus, who didn't even say one word and just moved the brush with eyes reflecting nothing, spoke.

Indifferently, emotionlessly, lifelessly, as if to simply "confirm".

【Game Start Condition "One": The challengers' memories from the past twenty-four hours——Collection, confirmed.】

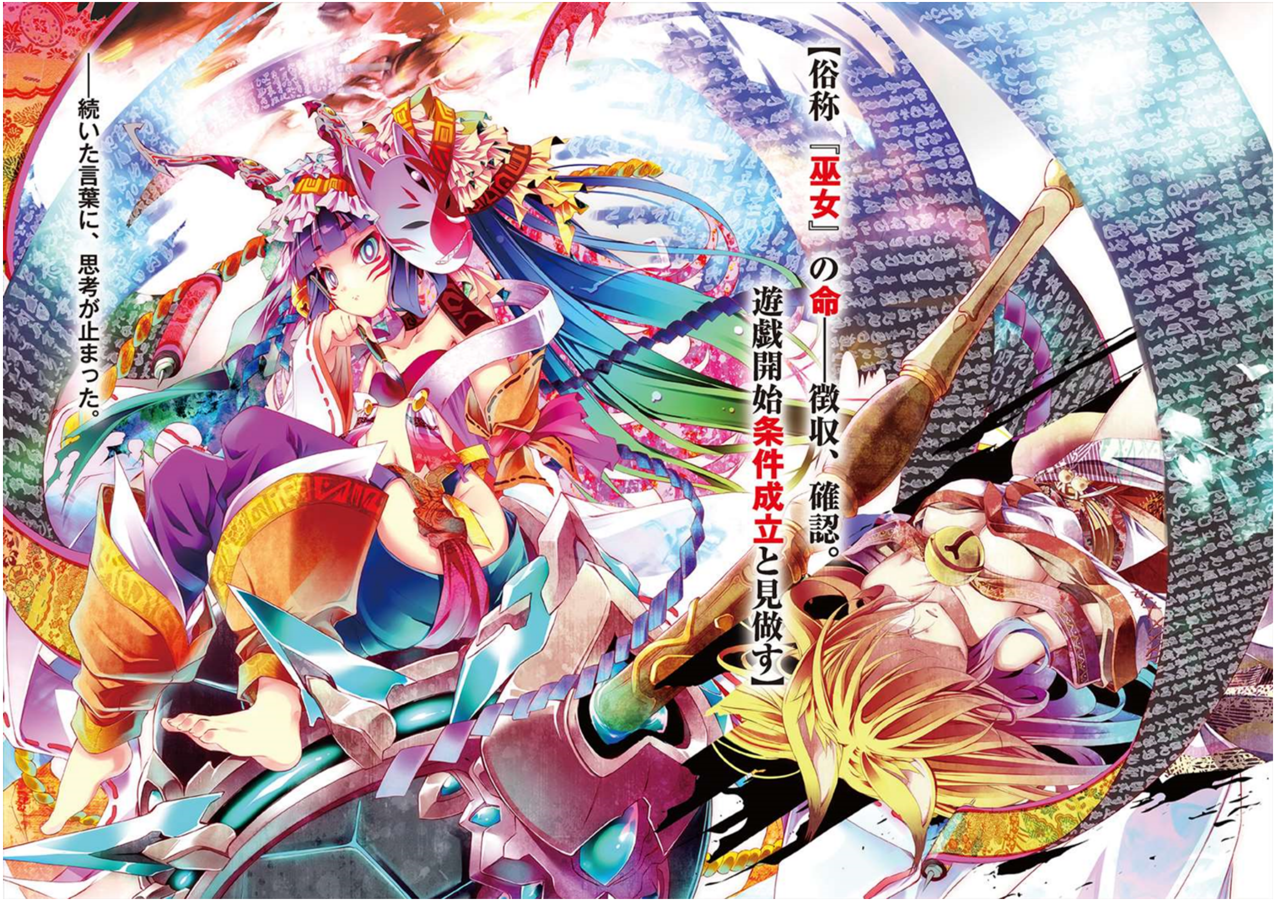
——At the words affirming his guess, only Sora and Shiro gathered and laughed fearlessly.

That god(That), just by floating in space, made even Jibril become pale.

This non-standard existence——This Old Deus, we challenged it to a game, they thought.

And the [*Starting Chip*] *was, in other words, twenty-four hours' worth of memories——it was this kind of situation.*

Sora's chest was filled with expectation, excited by a worthy opponent, but ——


【俗称『巫女』の命——徴収、確認。
遊戯開始条件成立と見做す】
——続いた言葉に、思考が止まった。

【“Two”. Provisional fee——the commonly called [Miko]’s life——Collection, confirmed. It will be considered as established by the Game Start conditions. 】

——All thoughts stopped after those words.

“——Wha……!? M-Miko-sama——!?”

It was concealed by the too overwhelming presence.

Right below the Old Deus floating in space, they noticed a puppet lying on the built white, wooden steps.

Ino let out a scream and ran, kicking from the ground as if to break it and Izuna followed after him.

The two of them lifted up the powerless and immobile Miko, continuously calling her but……

——With the Werebeasts’ five senses, they should’ve already known even before running.

If there was a breath in Miko’s body, if there was a pulsation——they should’ve noticed it long since.

That’s why, it was just like the Old Deus said——Her [life] had been collected.

——It was unmistakably…… Miko’s…… [remains].

——*Just what had happened?*

While Ino and Izuna’s backs were trembling, Sora desperately soothed his thoughts that were becoming a mess.

——*Calm down. The memories are still fine, but, Miko’s life was also a [starting chip]?*

There’s no way such a condition would ever be accepted*…… Did Miko, herself, wish for it? ——Or was it——*

【Now…… The [Sugoroku(game)[2]] you have desired——From this moment on, it’ll be considered to have started and the [regulations(rules)] will now be disclosed. 】

With an expression seemingly holding not the slightest interest in them——no, towards anything in the world.

The Old Deus(She) spoke indifferently, essentially lifelessly, with eyes releasing a cold shine——No.

01: Each of the seven players own [Mass Existence's Time] will be granted as ten [Dice], split into percentages.

02: The Dice Holder can only move across the same amount of squares as the outcome of throwing all the dice they possess.

03: The result from throwing the dice is random and, after throwing it, [one] die from the used ones is removed.

04: In the case of [traveling together], after declaring so, the travelers will only move in accordance to the outcome of the representative (one person).

05. In the case the number of players moving together surpasses two people, an [Overall Number of Travel Companions × Attendants]'s worth of dice will be removed from the number of dice used.

06: From the moment the game begins, the Players hold the right to create 50 【Tasks】 each.

07: The Dice Holder who's stopped on the square will be forced to follow any instructions the 【Task】 holds.

08: The Dice Holder cannot proceed until either the 【Task】 is accomplished or seventy-two hours passes.

09: The Dice Holder will be able to steal one die from the Question Master by accomplishing the 【Task.】 If it's not accomplished, then one die will be stolen from the Dice Holder instead.

10: Each 【Task】 will be described on a billboard arranged irregularly on the square's board

11. The 【Task】 may, based on its contents, change the environment of the square in question.

12: However, all 【Tasks】 that include any of the following will be considered invalid:

> **12a: Words limiting the 【Task】 to a specific target.**
>
> **12b: Instructions impossible to accomplish by anyone besides the Question Master or impossible for any of the Players.**
>
> **12c: Words directed at the Dice Holder designating an advance or retreat of squares, independently of the dice's outcome.**
>
> **12d: Words written in any language besides Imanity's.**

13: The Dice Holder to reach the last square will be the [Winner] and as such, the game will end.

14. The Old Deus in question has the obligation to fulfill all requests of the [Winner], within its' range of rights.

15. If all Players lose the entirety of their dice or if they become [Unable to Continue] through DEATH, the game will end.

16: In the case of becoming [Unable to Continue], the Old Deus in question will be granted the right to COLLECT EVERYTHING from all participants, except from the Leading Player.

00a: The game board is an imitation of reality, but, the events that occur there are all real, including death.

00b: ——There is one person among the Dice Holders whose memories weren't collected, a [Traitor].

——Exactly, effortlessly…… the [regulations(rules)] or whatever they were.

Directly into Sora and everyone's brains——it was simply *poured without question.*

——Just what is going on!

————Seriously, just what the hell is up with…… ***this****——!!*

"……Hey, don't be lazy and explain it with your mouth…… even a god has one right or is it really that annoying?"

Sora was talking lightly but, his face was dyed with an anxiety that couldn't be hidden.

It wasn't just Sora, when the rules were poured into their brains, all who instantly understood reacted the same way.

They looked at each other's puzzled, apprehensive, and anxious faces and ——*chests.*

That's right, chest——At the ten white cubes that had appeared near their chests at some point.

——I see, just like the Old Deus(brat) said, this…… looks like [Sugoroku].

On that land of spiral(game board) expanding above our heads, we throw these white dice and move on the squares.

As we throw the dice, they'll decrease by one, and the one that reaches the goal is victorious——

But, that means——

——Why did it——

————Become a ***game where the players kill each other****——!!*

【……Originally, words were the hand of creation.】

Was it because she knew what Sora thought inside his heart or was it because she didn't know——or maybe, it's because she didn't care.

The Old Deus(She) answered Sora's light talk with an unchanging cold gaze.

With eyes as if looking down upon a small pebble rolling near their feet, disinterestedly and lifelessly, but——

【If it's a god's words, then know that it's far too much for mere lower beings like yourselves.】

Those eyes had certainly captured Sora and Shiro's figures.

As if seeing through the two of them——or maybe something or "someone" existing deep inside.

“————?”

Those eyes he saw for a moment…… for Sora, they looked familiar.

An Old Deus——Those familiar eyes were far too unbecoming for someone of the transcendental species, but——

【You should learn the weight of your own words——If you have the wisdom for that, that is.】

It disappeared in an instant. The Old Deus(She) simply pointed the brush in its hands to the sky.

【I await at the end. Spend your predetermined life idly crawling on the ground——then, you may climb up. 】

After that proclamation, the Old Deus'(her) figure disappeared along with Miko’s corpse.

As if it was some kind of dream, like it didn’t exist from the very beginning…… so easily.

What was left were seven people including Sora, the seven doors, and——

——Silence.

Confusion, suspicion, impatience, maybe even rage had stagnated the place and was accumulating.

While gazes measuring each other were being exchanged, Sora bit his nails and once again questioned himself.

——***Just what is going on***……*!!*

“…………Nii.”

Shiro’s voice was calling from behind——but, he couldn’t even afford to answer.

Sora was pouring down a lot of sweat as he scrutinized the rules——many times, again and again……

Certainly, there’s a lot of areas that feel like something is wrong, but, ***it was weird from the start****, damn it——!*

“……Nii…… Hey…… Hey, Nii……”

In this game, if you don’t steal someone else’s dice then it’s ***theoretically impossible to reach the goal.***

If one person writes fifty squares, then the amount of squares will be [350] plus the [rising squares].

But, if the number of dice decreases as they’re thrown then even if you keep getting six——the limit will be [324].

Even more so when it’s a “Prisoner’s Dilemma” ——There’s no possible result besides stealing each other’s dice.

Exactly, if you don’t steal someone else’s [life(dice)] ***divided into ten parts****, you* *cannot reach the goal.*

——*Then,* ***for starters****!!*

"…………………………Nii, if you keep ignoring Shiro…… if you don't answer…… then——"

——*This was supposed to be [a game with an Old Deus as the opponent], right——and yet!*

Why did it turn into a one where the Old Deus is a "game master" ——

This development of ***making players kill each other*** *is——*

"……Shiro…… will put down panties…… and flip, skirt."

"WHA YES NIICHAN IS RIGHT HERE HE ANSWER WHAT!?"

——He responded to the urgent situation that prevailed over any and all crisis——That is.

To protect his little sister's chastity, Sora turned around while forcefully ending(shutting down) all thought processes and even caused a shock wave——

"————————————————Hah?"

Then, Shiro lowered *Steph's* panties.

The interlude where the skirt obeyed gravity——in that miraculous moment.

He pressed the X button inside his brain without hesitation.

And then Sora engraved
the current scene deeply into his heart.

"H——Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!? Wh-Wh-W-What are you doing so suddenly!"

Putting aside Steph, who let a scream resound an instant slower, hurriedly pulled up her underwear, and pressed down on her skirt.

The Great Person(Little Sister) who let him see the Xanadu(Utopia) spoke expressionlessly.

"……Didn't say…… Shiro's……"

"……Ahh, that's right~ Nii-chan was completely fooled you know, ahahaha this~ fel~low~♪"

Needle-like gazes poured from all directions towards Sora, who forgot the situation being in such high spirits——

He repeatedly pressed down the [remember] command inside his brain.

Sage Time Sora was playing back that Xanadu in a loop and didn't show signs of noticing it.

"Steph…… you finally stopped hiding your exhibitionist habit, huh? No, I don't mind it at all, you see?"

"Haaaah!? S-She sneaked behind me and undressed me on her own, you know!?"

"It's fine if you don't hide your heart, OK? By the [Ten Oaths], she can't undress you if you don't allow/accept it even if subconsciously…… as such, it was *something you desired* and——"

With a voice like Buddha disturbing a lotus flower blooming, Sora eventually made a sign with his hands——suddenly, stopped.

……*Wait.*

————*Wait, wait, wait, wait!! ……Or rather.*

"…………Why is Steph here?"

"Saying 'why is she here' after doing something like that is already bullying, isn't it!?"

She asserted with teary eyes, but Sora simply ignored it and turned around, looking back to the gazes directed at him in order.

Shiro, Jibril, Izuna, Ino——then, Plum and……

————.

"……Nii, calmed down……?"

"……Erm…… Shiro. Could it be that, Nii-chan——took too long to notice?"

Sora let out a smile, snorting at himself, but Shiro returned it with a face not holding a single trace of nervousness.

Exposing the game——seeing Sora depressed for lagging behind field of expertise, Shiro said.

"……Shiro, too…… don't understand…… the situation…… but……"

There wasn't anything she needed to worry about if it was within her brother's field of expertise.

"……If it's…… 'the usual'…… Nii, then…… it'll be fine…… so……"

Saying that, Shiro held his hands and with that sensation…… Sora seriously reflected.

——He was aware he was an idiot. Rather, he was even proud of it.

Not only that, if it was about the degree of idiocy, then he was even proud no one could match him.

This kind of me.

Even if it was a situation like that——Just why did I let the blood rush——

——Just why did I think about it ***so seriously****?*

Right——Smiling bitterly at the situation he finally managed to get a grasp of, Sora turned straight to Steph.

"Erm…… I feel like I don't even need to ask, but, did you under——"

"——Did not understand the rules! I'm sorry about that, alright!"

Still exposing her cautiousness even now, Steph yelled while pressing down on her skirt.

Smiling at the real fact and her misplaced confidence that, now, even felt reliable, Sora continued.

"To put it simply, this is 'Sugoroku'. You throw the dice and proceed towards *that* thing above our heads aiming for the goal."

"Hmm, hmm."

"And so, about those dice. Those will decrease one by one as you keep throwing them."

"Yes, yes."

After saying that, Sora picked one of the plain white cubes that showed up near his chest…… one die.

After you throw this die, you'll get a random outcome for certain, huh——

"About this? It's *age*——Basically, it's your [Life], alright."

"————————————What?"

Steph froze, but Sora continued speaking *like usual.*

"If it reaches zero, you're dead. Eternal sleep, ascension to heaven, last moments——like that. Do you follow me up to here?"

"……Eh, yes? It's not fine at all, right!? Eh, we'll die!?"

The rules said [Mass Existence's Time] ——so the correct term should be "disappearance".

It was supposed to be a game where one bets their lifespan, but the one without a lifespan(Jibril) who's not a [mortal] would be a problem.

Anyway, one can guess what will happen if her existence time——if her age becomes [zero].

"And so, *it's absolutely impossible to reach the goal* with only ten dice. That's why there's no choice aside from increasing the number of dice."

If one includes the rising squares, it will be [351] squares until the goal.

One can only get up to [324] with the biggest outcome possible——it still won't reach the goal.

"For that——we use the【Tasks】to steal the others' dice——do you understand now?"

——In the end, this game.

"This game was designed so we'd steal [Life(dice)] from each other——and, *there's no other way to ascend if not by indirectly killing each other."*

As Sora summarized the rules, everyone's eyes became sharp as they measured each other.

It was a game against an Old Deus——*and yet.*

There was no other way to win besides defeating(killing) the other players——but.

"——Don't joke with me——There's no way I will accept something like that!!"

"*Right?* No one wants to die~ I don't want to die, either~ That's why——*We're going to go like this."*

Steph yelled after finally understanding the situation, but, Sora continued while laughing even so.

"Everyone leaves the tasks [empty] and one person will gather nine dice from each person."

——*There's no rule forbidding "dice transference". Then*——

"With this, it'll be the birth of the [64 Dice Holder]!! The biggest value with just one play will be [384] ——if you're not careful, it's still possible to reach the goal with a single move! No one will reach zero and no one will die~…… It's okay to fall for me, you know?"

"————N-Now, for the first time, I'm in the mood where I actually think it would be fine to fall……”

Steph said, being incredibly simplistic though, she really seemed to be moved, but——

“B-But, Master…… wouldn’t that be impossible if the [Traitor] isn’t identified……?”

Exactly, there’s surely no way Sora(Master) haven’t noticed.

What Jibril had timidly submitted was exactly that——*the true identity of this paranoia.*

00b: ——There is one person among the Dice Holders whose memories weren’t collected, a [Traitor].

It was a game that purposely started with [Erasure of memories before the game] as a condition.

That meant nothing else but basically “there was something” only the [Traitor] knew.

Since *no one confessed to it……* the traitor’s intent was clear.

Deceive everyone, plot something so only they would win——literally, a [Traitor].

Who will they gather the dice at? ——No, before that conversation.

The situation where everyone should recognize Miko’s life as a [Starting Chip] was already impossible.

If one went by the memories of the [Traitor] that set everyone up, *even the victory conditions would change……!!*

——Sora also made the blunder of thinking about such an “enormously irrelevant point”, but——

“Ahh~ about that. There’s no problem at all.”

Sora dismissed it with a smile in an instant, not only Jibril, but Ino, Izuna, and Plum too——no.

Shiro, also, raised her eyebrows in doubt and only Sora smiled bitterly.

——*I see, so there is a traitor.*

Is it the kind of overused scenario where even though you can win if everyone cooperates, you can’t cooperate with each other?

The one where everyone becomes paranoid while investigating each other wondering who’s the traitor and destroying their bonds——where everyone self-destructs?

You must have expected that kind of guaranteed [standard(theory)] with the super serious development of a sure liar game?

Then, I’m rea~lly sorry about it, he thought.

Sora regained his usual expression and laughed, ridiculing it——that development was what's precisely impossible.

That guarantee(theory) was the first thing to be excluded from the very fact these members were participating.

Even more so when it was Sora, who was like that since he was born and only knew to live that way, he laughed at it with his nose.

Hell if I know about that guarantee(theory)——"Who is the traitor," you ask?

————***Anyone is fine since it doesn't matter either way.***

"Because it's annoying——*Let's just say I'm the [Traitor]♪"*

That's right. Sora miscellaneously truncated everything and said that with a really good smile.

…………

…………There was a silence deeper than the ocean.

Interpreting the stunned, confused, and suspicious silence as [dissatisfaction], Sora continued.

"Eh, are you thinking *I wouldn't betray* since I'm playing a game with these members!? T-Then as evidence……"

——*I'll think about it right now, so wait a little.*

The self-proclaimed traitor imposingly declared so while whining and using sophistry——

"Anyway, the [Traitor] is the one who plots something in order to leave everyone out so only they can win, right?"

After taking a single breath, he looked at the faces of everyone lined up around him, pointing in order.

"Then first, Izuna is [not guilty(white)]. There's no way she could win against me and Shiro on deception and exclusion."

——*twitch* Izuna's ears twitched and her eyes became round.

"Gramps' also [not guilty(white)]. There's no way he has the guts to use Miko-san's life only to leave us out of it."

——*pachi* Crackles ran through Ino's glasses as his face became red with blood vessels popping up.

"Plum's also [not guilty(white)]. There's no way someone who completely and perfectly lost to us would take such a risk."

——*suu* Plum's eyes slowly became sharp and his lips twisted a little.

"Jibril is also [not guilty(white)] since it would be all over if Shiro and I were to say 'confess'. Even more so when there's no way she would ever think of something so scary as leaving her great master that is Sora-sama out of it, ri~ght?"

——*Yes!* Jibril's eyes opened up, but, she followed with an insecure smile.

"And you are an exception, excluded, not even worth a single thought! Done proving it!!"

"Wait a second!? Wasn't I, alone, too much miscellaneously!?"

"And then, lastly, Shiro and I are 'two people as one'——So, was all the above satisfying enough, I wonder?"

"…………ah……"

——Noticing the intention of her brother, Shiro revealed a small smile.

Exactly…… This is a [game].

The possession or lack of memories didn't matter as there's countless things that could be affirmed——for example.

Sora is an 18-year-old virgin——*There was no way you of all people have ever held hands properly* or something.

Everything is decided by games——in [World on Top of a Game Board(this world)].

Tet flashily made and even prattled it was the utopia Sora and Shiro saw in their dreams——this world.

This development suits it way better than the one from a sure liar game.

Yes, it was the same as——

——*What's so wrong about being a confined sniper(ignoring standards)?*

"That's how it is! The contradiction this is a game against an Old Deus, yet the Players have to kill each other has been solved! That's why it's been proved to be a collaboration game——'a game you can win if you trust each other!' So relax and throw in your blank 【Tasks】 and give the dice to me——Ah no, let's say it more politely."

Then, he stopped and started gesturing like a pretentious stage actor——Ah, Ah……

And with a really good voice and a smile even God would find lovely.

"*Cooperate with me so I can win* by giving me all of your [lives(dice)], you servants. *As a proof of trust❤*"

……After Sora said that, one by one they filled out their 【Tasks. 】

They walked to the room beyond the door that isolated everyone from each other.

And, while exiting——Sora laughed completely aloof and nonchalantly.

This game was really simple, who was the traitor——it could be anyone.

——*We're playing with those members, after all——Since.*

——————*They can sincerely believe I'll betray everyone,* *right?*

Chapter 1 — Rejuvenation and Aging(Closed Circle)

——Seven hours must have passed since the start of the game with the Old Deus.

Sora was currently running through an alley covered by the darkness of the night.

——There were no stars in the night sky separated by the squares of concrete.

Droplets of a small rain and rough footsteps were hitting the hard asphalt.

A handgun was ready in his hands and the approaching shadow reflected in his eyes——was only the [Enemy].

[————Chh!!]

He clicked his tongue once. Overlaying his sights on the enemy, he pulled the trigger with machine-like thinking.

The hammer stroked the detonator, the explosives' shell casing reacted and detonated——the shock caused his hand to shake.

The supersonic gas born from the conversion to solid phase pushed everything out from inside the gun and made it accelerate——

——The lead blown from the muzzle split the air. The flash of light uncovered the shadow.

With a process in less than milliseconds, it turned into a deadly weapon piercing through the dark night——the lead and the light.

It shot the following shadow with a frightening speed——hitting the body of the small Werebeast uncovered by the flash of light.

——Yes, it was at the [body]…… He won't aim at the [head].

The firepower of a handgun from such a weird game couldn't be trusted. No, even with the handgun that Sora knew from the old world, the bullet would slip on the bone with the smallest angle of deviation. That was even more true when it was the cranium, the toughest bone in the human body.

Even more so when the [enemy] wasn't human…… they were Werebeasts and monsters greater than that.

The aim was the triangle made by the jaw and both chests. It'll steal the combat capacity no matter where it hits and, if it hits the center, he can hope damage to the vital organs——Now, what will a coldly and rationally fired bullet pursuing the kill will do he wondered.

It teared into the small Werebeast who slipped on the road with the same speed as when she followed——and turned into a corpse.

——He killed it. That's right, he killed it.

This game is really simple, Sora laughed darkly.

————If the traitor isn't known, then it doesn't matter who it is.

Except his little sister, the only one who definitely won't betray him…… he can simply kill everyone else.

Remove everyone suspected to be a traitor——this incredibly simple answer was *this game's* scenario(theory).

Yes, it's a simple game, Sora covered himself and smiled bitterly.

Simple——but also a game easily surpassing the very hard, with a super degree of difficulty(Inferno Mode).

That's because the [enemy] was a bunch of monsters one couldn't compete with normally.

Even then, I still can't lose——he had survived until now with that stubbornness.

Sora turned his gaze around and sorted out the situation cautiously.

——It was a Tokyo like the one he saw in the game with the Eastern Union——but, somehow different.

The height of the buildings, the complex back alleys, the objects installed at each place of that map——

Making full use of those advantageous spots, he managed to finish off a large-sized Werebeast, a Dhampir, and a small-sized Werebeast.

All were done in through trickery and shooting: feigning to be an ally, shooting at their back, luring them out with lies, then sniping them.

While being called [dirty] repeatedly by Shiro, he survived until now by not choosing his methods——but.

——That *nasty monster who calls itself an angel.*

Just that one alone——he didn't feel like it'll work out somehow at all.

After sorting the situation out, he let out a sigh in the back alley, covered his respiration and strained his ears.

Countless footsteps in the distance were slowly getting closer, gradually closing in.

[If I could at least regroup with my sister…… No, I guess even that wouldn't be desirable in this situation, huh.]

It was a hopeless speech——but, this kind of speech at such a time was obviously a *flag*.

While thinking that half-expected, half-amazed, Sora's ears captured the footsteps firmly stepping in the back alley.

——He reacted even faster than his thoughts.

Ahead of the aim was the figure of a red-hair girl——Contrary to Sora's will, the aim wavered.

The girl was suspicious. Rather than suspicious, it's as if it's far harder to search for something that wasn't.

But, Sora put aside those thoughts and eventually spoke some words.

[You, just how did you get inside this area…… No, leave that for later. My sister's together with you, huh. Did you find a countermeasure——]

[Yes…… we found it.]

——There was no sound, only the shock conveyed.

He understood it in one beat. It seemed the bullet came flying *from behind* the red-haired girl and pierced his abdomen.

[We should've just done this from the very start…… Isn't that right, Traitor-san?]

[——Wrong…… that was a bluff…… ——!]

Contrary to his will, his body didn't move, his blurry vision captured the shooter of the devilish bullet that pierced through him——

He gasped. The slightly red light from the fire burning the gun barrel reflected the one approaching through the gun's smoke.

The white-haired girl…… for the sake of searching for a way to survive this hopeless game.

She had accompanied the red-haired girl——it was his little sister.

……Putting Sora aside, whose thoughts stopped(froze) with his mouth opened, dumbfounded.

[If the one going around killing everyone isn't the traitor, then who would you say it is!?]

Hearing the infuriated scream, "Wrong" …… he replied.

Or he tried to, but, a load of blood overflowed from his mouth and spilled out instead.

[That was…… because if I didn't do so…… At the time, you wouldn't have, protected my sister——]

——Just like a revelation, Sora came to understand it in an instant.

It was within predictions the red-haired girl would betray.

But, the little sister——the one that definitely wouldn't betray him, had betrayed…… then the answer was——

[It was…… you, huh…… the real traitor——the 'fake' was you…… from the very start……!!]

Exactly——Looking back at her slowly dying brother with mocking eyes——towards that *something.*

[With my sister's appearance, with her face…… don't turn those trashy eyes to meeeeee————!!]

The red-haired girl swallowed her breath at his wailing scream——but, it was too late.

The flash of light mercilessly illuminated the back alley once again——two times, three times.

The figure of the red-haired girl collapsing on the ground reflected in his already half-blackened vision.

[…… It's a lie, right…… I only, believed——]

——*in you,* but, her lips stopped midway, the light wouldn't return to her dull eyes ever again.

The white-haired girl——the traitor with the appearance of his little sister slowly approached him.

Hearing the sound of the shoes hitting the hard cold asphalt as death approached, Sora finally——concluded.

——*Ah. This is a shitty game.*

A development where not knowing what will happen is very good. But, ***super development****, you're no good.*

When and where was the flag indicating that the traitor(fake) was the sister(this guy)?

In the first place, what was that speech——"I only believed in you"?

Say that earlier. A hint that's only collected right before the event can't be called a hint!

[I wonder…… Where did I go wrong……? For what reason, did I…… work so hard……]

Continuing even after having defined it as a shitty game, Sora sharply agreed with that no-good line.

——*Aahh, really, just for what reason did you work so hard for.*

Just one thing…… it was "for the sake of his little sister" that he endured Inferno Mode and came this far.

But, if that single thing was fake, then, his efforts and hardships.

Just for what reason——had he piled up tricks, tactics, and strategies——!?

[Bye, bye Nii……]

Just a single shot. The impact told him so, but, the end was slow——the white-haired girl's last voice.

Isolated by the darkness…… lifelessly——echoed.

"……Nii…… how does it feel…… to die, a virgin?"

…………

————*Wait a second.*

No, no, seriously wait a second!

"Hey, Shiro, that's a lie, right! You're randomly saying whatever you feel like just because Nii-chan can't understand the Werebeasts' language, right!! If you say such reckless things, how will you take responsibility if I accidentally end up crying, huh!?"

——And then, the black-haired young man lost consciousness.

Sora yelled with teary eyes while gazing at that screen, holding the controller.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——Now, it surely doesn't need to be said.

What was reflected on the screen wasn't Sora and Shiro, obviously not Steph, either.

Of course, the Old Deus' game——[Sugoroku] didn't have even the slightest relation to it.

——It was right at the beginning, soon after Sora loudly made the [Traitor] declaration.

Sora requested everyone's dice, but they all finished writing their 【Tasks】 and left through the door.

As if it was obvious. No, extremely natural——saying [This fight, we'll buy it].

After each of them spoke out their words, feelings, they all threw their own dice, proceeding as they pleased.

Likewise, naturally, Sora and Shiro threw their dice and proceeded to aim for their outcome of [62] ——But.

Passing through *one square,* the moment they stepped on the second square, they looked to the sky, then gazed at the nearest house.

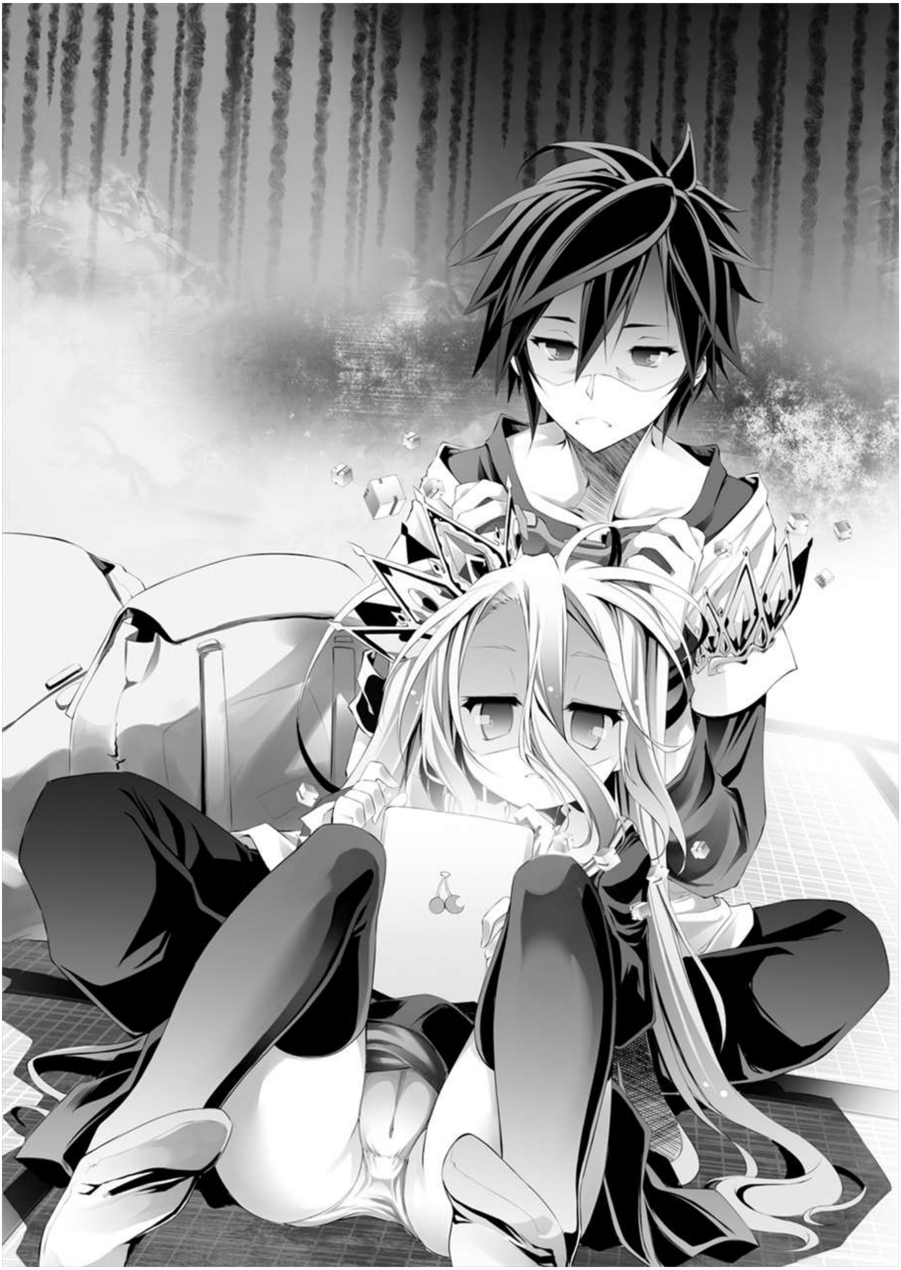
——[*Ah, this is an impossible game.*]

After nodding to each other, they decided to refreshingly forget about everything, confining themselves inside that house——and ran from reality(played games).

……Thus, suffering their first defeat, the story(life) of [   ](Kuuhaku) is now over.

Please wait expectantly for Sora and Shiro's next work(life).

【THE END】



——Those two went past the shell of the period of life and rushed straight to the afterword.

On one hand, one could see eight dice——the siblings' age had reduced by two-tenths and their limbs had shrunk.

But the Old Deus' game had long since turned into a memory of a previous world, already far beyond the horizon of oblivion.

They found an Eastern Union's [Domestic Game Machine] in the house they confined themselves in.

——Was there a game? [There are.]

——Was there a reason to not play it? [None.]

Thinking for zero seconds, the two of them wordlessly started the game machine and ran from reality refreshed.

Sora, who didn't understand the language of the Werebeasts——provisionally 14.4 years old, set the subtitles to ON.

Shiro, using Sora's crossed legs as a pillow while playing with the Tablet PC ——provisionally 8.8 years old, read the subtitles out loud.

Seeing his sister's unexpected acting skills, though improvising, she translated all the characters' lines with rich representations——*Why doesn't she always speak lucidly like that?* Two hours had passed since he pulled out such a profound question——But.

After finally throwing away the controller, Sora grabbed the package and growled.

"Even though I expected the Eastern Union would also have 'Zombie Games'…… what a shitty game."

The title was [Living or Dead 3 ~ The Price of Silence] ……apparently. According to Shiro.

It also seemed its sequel was a spin-off called [Love or Loved] ——the game they played against Izuna.

This is what happens when one expects something from it and tries playing something from their screwed up senses.

The setting goes like this——The Elves' large-scale magic experiment to resurrect the dead had…… well, it was the usual super failure thing.

The out of control magic gave birth to the walking(living) dead~ and spread throughout the entire world~

The traitors(Living Dead) feigning to be alive were hidden among their friends and~ a game with a high level of stupidity.

That was fine. A stupid game? It's a favorite! ——But.

"Just what kind of decision leads to making a 'Macho Werebeast Zombie with Wings' considered fine in the head?"

Not a single attack worked, he growled after being reminded of that *nasty monster who called itself an angel.*

Yes——It was a nasty monster.

He was half-naked, no, that was pretty much fully naked, wearing only a loincloth.

It was the extremely difficult and abnormally weird shitty game with a shitty development at all times but, he still endured it.

All for the sake of the only solace in his mind! The [Little Sister]! A white-haired loli with cute animal ears!

…… *And the result was that*——after Sora suddenly remembered the protagonist's speech.

"*Where did you go wrong?* It's the brain of the staff who made this game that's wrong——"

Throwing away the package, Sora barked while lying on the tatami mat.

Enduring it for the sake of the little sister character, there was a super development where the sister was the [fake].

As if that wasn't enough, he was killed while she looked at him as if he was trash——

…………*Hmm?*

"Hm~…… Well, that part was fine. Yeah. On second thought, that was a reward."

"……Nii, just how much…… do you plan on…… being aggravated……?"

He let out a single cough after being looked by his real sister as if she was looking at trash.

"……Nnnn! ……W-Well, as expected, the problem surely must be this scenario, right……"

He looked at the screen while still sprawled on the ground.

On screen, the protagonist had used his privilege——no matter how many death flags he raised, they all turn into survival flags, he'd wake up somewhere without displaying any regrets, just like it was written.

But Sora already lost interest in the development after that, so he rolled around and looked at the ceiling.

While emptying his head and spacing out, he once again remembered that speech.

——[I wonder…… where did I go wrong……], was it.

"……Suspicion kills everyone——I wonder why'd you think *only you wouldn't be betrayed……*"

That kind of [common sense(theory)]——It's obvious everyone will think the same thing.

"If you betray then, you'll be betrayed. It's just inevitable……"

Exactly——Just like how those guys wrote their【Tasks】after betraying so easily.

Sora clicked his tongue at the same time——he thought about "this situation".

"——Hey Shiro, I wonder where did I go wrong……"

"If you're seriously asking that, then shall I. Answer. You!?"

But the answer he got was a furious roar and——

"*Even though you betrayed me and made it impossible for me to return that betrayal!* You threw everything at me even after forcefully dragging me, so Why. Are. You. Holing. Yourself. Up huh——!?"

A red-haired girl rushed inside the room after breaking down the sliding door together with a cart.

Just like Sora and Shiro——with eight dice on their chest——she had shrunk to 14.4 years old.

——The one whose breathing was coarse due to yelling was Stephanie Dola.

"See! I acquired the 'cart' you wanted, didn't I!?"

"…………Uh…… m?"

"——What was that about again?"

"You said you *wouldn't move unless I brought a cart,* didn't you!"

Seeing Sora and Shiro's blank response, Steph roared while scratching her head.

"Now, it's fine if I pull it like a cart right, literally like a horse pulling a cart, right!"

Yes, Steph turned the cart around inside the room, taking no for an answer and urged Sora and Shiro.

Scooping the surprised two like a shovel to ride the cart——following, literally, the principle of a carriage.

In a way, the BGM "Dona, Dona"[3] would fit really well.

Steph mercilessly dragged the two recluses out of the room……

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——In the second square…… Steph left the cart she was pulling and sprawled on the ground.

It was being used as a bed by Shiro, who was using the tablet PC with hollow eyes.

Steph cried out to Sora, who, until about two hours ago, declared the view before him as an [impossible game].

“So? Isn’t it about time for me to get a satisfying explanation!?”

“……About what? Eh, could it be…… about the reason I declared to be the traitor? That was——”

“Yes, yes, it was to fool the idiot(me), right~? I already know that!”

Sora answered evasively in an effort to reject the view in front of him but Steph’s screaming continued.

“Not even I would fail to see through that stinking act(lie) so it’s really unsettling you thought otherwise!!”

——That’s right, there wasn’t even a single speck of truth in Sora’s [traitor declaration].

With a purity rate of 100%, free of any intent to ever add any element into it ——a super lie.

Without needing the five senses(being a Warbeast) to uncover the lie——Even Steph knew it was a third-rate act.

But——That was exactly why.

Steph didn’t know *what she was supposed to do.*

——[I don’t know what Sora’s real intentions are…… but]

——[I believe——he won’t let anyone die or kill each other.]

She extended out her nine dice to Sora together with such a lame speech.

——While trembling with a pale face. She transferred her existence’s time ——“her life”.

Knowing one’s life is fading away surely must cause an incredible amount of fear…… but.

If this game was all about the [life(dice)] decreasing as one proceeds, then.

Which one was better…… That——or stealing from those close to you and indirectly killing them?

Putting the fear on the scales, she swallowed her patheticness, but, even so, she still decided to do it——

“When I finally decided to hand over the dice, it backfires on me! Everyone keenly made that eloquent traitor declaration!!"

——[I'll buy that fight, desu!] Izuna spoke in a cute way.

——[It's an honor for me to be able to challenge Master.] Jibril said so reverently.

——[I'll make you regret throwing salt on my wounds, got it?] Plum said mysteriously.

——And Ino said [Die]…… really, it was straight-forward, without beating around the bush——

"There's also what you said when you guys threw your own [lives(dice)] unhesitatingly——when all I could do was watch!!"

While that was happening, Steph already handed over nine dice——nine-tenths of her life.

Basically, Steph had returned to a single die's worth of age…… [1.8 years old].

Sora had gained nine dice' worth of time and was now [34.2 years old].

Together with Shiro, he smiled——a smile so nice it even looked creepy, at Steph.

——[Hm, the amount of age(dice) held only affects the body, holding more than ten makes you grow older.]

——[……Then, Nii…… now that you…… confirmed that…… there's no problem……]

——[Right. Then——now, we'll have you "travel together" with us, alright.]

——[……If you don't…… want to, then…… it's fine, too……]

——[But then, you'll have to wait here all alone and sad, with only one dice ——]

——[……Because, we want to…… wait until, everyone dies…… then…… right❤]

——[Ah, also. If no one gets to the top, then everyone besides the leading player will die. Of course❤]

"——My feelings when you two *threatened* me and *used* me! Answer everything within ten characters!!"

Hearing the roaring Steph, Sora went *Hmm*…… and scratched his jaw.

Within ten characters, now that's a quite a challenge——but.

"……I think…… it's…… 'Not doing it'……"

"Oooh, Shiro! That's exactly ten characters!! As expected of the Crossword

Master!!"

"You. Are. Super. Correct~❤——I'll snap if you don't cut it out already!?"

Steph rioted by rocking and rattling the cart when Shiro immediately answered.

"Ahhhh wait, wait I say! That was obviously because all that was absurd, right!?"

"Right, right, now that I think about it, it was obvious, wasn't it——!"

Steph shouted deprecatingly in a single breath.

"Even if Sora gathers the dice, *you can't be separated from Shiro*, isn't that right!? Only a fool would fall for such a bait, right! And I'm the only one who did that, right!!"

——Yes. From the start, Sora and Shiro were a "rule left untouched intentionally" ——In other words.

04: In the case of [traveling together], after declaring so, the travelers will only move in accordance to the outcome of the representative(one person**).**

05. In the case the number of players moving together surpasses two people, an [Overall Number of Travel Companions × Attendants]'s worth of dice will be removed from the number of dice used.

——If the [traveling together] rule isn't used, they *cannot proceed.*

Even more so when there's a reaction to possessing more than ten dice by growing older.

Everyone's dice——he would be [115.2 years old] if the sixty-four dice were to gather at Sora——normally, he'd become senile.

That's why they followed the rule and added the [9 dice] he got by deceiving Steph to Shiro's [9 dice].

After declaring they would travel together, they threw twenty-eight dice——it decreased by six, two per person.

"……Cheer up, already…… We properly returned your dice, right……?"

It was redistributed in a way so each person would possess eight dice——but.

"*Why did you make everyone betray each other!!* I'll keep making a fuss until I get an explanation, you know!?"

It indicated Sora's objective was consistently——[to draw Steph over to his side].

……And——

————To have [her assistance in betraying the others], none other than that.

It was the same as Sora had said, where they would kill each other——a situation he wanted to avoid.

While Steph was shouting why it did it "lead to this", Sora——did this.

"Hyaah!? W-What…… are you doing?"

Sora held her cheeks with his hands and forcefully made her face him, then he gazed into her eyes.

Forgetting her anger, her face was red without realizing, Sora, with a gaze full of sincerity——announced.

"Believe and just leave it to me. With the power of love, courage, and friendship, everyone will——prevail."

————.

"……You're waiting for a retort, right? Can I ask you to reflect on your own past?"

When asked by one who betrayed and made them betray(lied) intentionally, what would be a sufficient reply to "please believe in me"?

Steph answered that question, that dilemma, while looking down at him with an icy gaze.

"Wha…… Why, why don't you believe me!? What are you doubting about this purely-pure me who's that *pure*!?"

"While I'm at it, I also want you to reflect on the present, alright!? More specifically, where you're *currently* using me as a cart horse!!"

Sora's expression was so filled with acting, Steph continued pursuing.

He had held Steph's head and spoke with sincerity——Indeed, that sounded really good.

But in reality, he had forcibly turned her around and was *currently* making her pull the cart so to speak.

——Her expression questioned whether there was any element besides [distrust] in this.

"Right. *That's* it. That's the answer."

But, Sora spread his arms out and——exalted.

"Did everyone agree on a game where you can win if you trust and cooperate with each other? *Even though I'm here!?* In a game with Miko-san's life as the price, would everyone readily agree and believe in stuff like love and friendship? If the winner can only be the one that reaches the goal, then would they definitely move so [ ](we) end up winning——*even though I'm here!?* Hmm~~!?"

——He emphasized it twice.

"Are you trying to say that everyone will believe in me?" ——Using his own lack of trust as basis.

After being affirmed it was impossible to not betray, Steph turned to the heavens and cried out.

"What should I do about this…… there's nothing but persuasion……"

This game held seemingly complicated rules and many seemingly weird places——but, in truth, it's quite simple.

Fifth of the [Ten Oaths] ——The challenged party has the right to decide the contents of the game.

Since memories before the game aren't there, they don't know whether the challenged one was the Old Deus or not.

But, in any case, to begin the game——"everyone's consent" was a major prerequisite.

Did that lineup agree to a cooperative game with memory loss and Miko's death as compensation——?

——There's no way such a prerequisite would be accepted, right?

"If the premise can't be accepted, then it's a simple story, right——?"

Rolling around in the cart once again, Sora put Shiro on his chest and laughed.

If it's based on the premise that there's an "improbable prerequisite" among the rules, then——

"It means that *there are falsehoods within the rules.*"

"……Something…… that was in the *first explanation*…… but wasn't in the *second one*……"

"……The second one…… you say?"

"This is a game started by【Pledging the Oaths.】It started after confirming the rules, but the memories were erased——There's a *difference* between the rules explained and the rules in the [Traitor]'s memories."

Yes, Sora answered without care.

Purposely starting the game after [erasing memories before the game] and only disclosing the rules *after that.*

On top of that, clearly stating someone whose memories weren't erased was a [traitor]——it's hard to not doubt it.

"But, well, frankly speaking——something like that doesn't really matter."

——*It didn't matter who the traitor was…… No, to be precise.*

That lineup, everyone agreed and started the game——and there were *rusksacks on their backs.*

The difference between the memories don't matter, since just that tells us everything. ——Sora laughed fearlessly.

Everyone cooperating with each other was something impossible, far more stupid than the premises.

——*It was far more* ***possible*** *for things to go this way, right?*

"All of us started this game assuming *we all would betray each other*—— and,"

If that lineup(we) were to agree to something, it would be with this, right?

"——Every single one of us prepared a scenario where we, ourselves, would be the ones to win……♪"

Sora laughed pretentiously in a loud voice——proclaiming that he was clean.

"——Therefore! Cleanly, correctly and beautifully! Overflowing with sincerity! This humble me named Sora, a virgin and 18 years——due to having eight dice, provisionally 14.4 years old! Took the liberty to make an oath, as the representative of the Players!"

He spoke with a smile while standing up and moving around his hands in a huge act——In other words.

"Oath. *We*, in accordance with the rules hereby swear——to betray fair and square, like that."

——No trust could win against their confidence that "they will definitely betray them."

That's why it was an oath to make them remember that.

Steph stopped and turned around without turning the cart and yelled.

"I won't accept, something like that…… In the end, that's just killing…… I won't consent!!"

"*Right?* That's why it also confirms the 'falsehood within the rules'."

But, while still speaking like that, once again, he sat in the cart and answered with a creepy, bitter smile.

Rules which not a single one of them would agree to will all be [false]——In other words.

"We agreed on betraying each other. We even took the initiative."

——But.

"*We didn't agree to kill each other*——that was all."

…………

——Once again, the sound of the wheels of the cart rolling echoed.

Sora laughed on the inside at Steph's silence, who couldn't refute but wasn't satisfied, either.

It's natural for someone with common sense(Steph) to be unsatisifed with that ——if Sora's principle was broken down, after all.

In the name of her grandfather, if one looked into it with uncovered and clean eyes.

——[All the mysteries were solved; the culprits are us!] ——it'll be like this.

Indeed, certainly it's a game that would be impossible to trust and cooperate with these members.

But, for Steph, it was too much to simply say that [betraying each other is the right answer], so……

"There's no choice but to betray each other——It's impertinently putting on the airs of a [Prisoner's Dilemma]."

Sora commented ironically, Steph turned around while pulling the cart.

"……Prisoner's Dilemma…… you say?"

——If everyone cooperates and someone manages to win, then maybe everyone's lives will be saved.

——But, if you betray, then you can win yourself.

——The moment everyone thinks that, the chances of everyone losing increases……

"It's a famous example in our previous world, but…… To put it simply——"

————A detective brings a certain possible deal to Prisoner A and Prisoner B.

【1】If both of them remain quiet, then, both of them will receive a [prison sentence of 2 years].

【2】If one of them confess, the one who confessed will be [released] while the other who remained quiet will receive a [prison sentence of 10 years].

【3】But, if both of them confess, both will receive a [prison sentence of 5 years].

If the prisoners believe in each other and remain quiet, they'll get away with the better result——a [prison sentence of 2 years].

But as long as the prisoners pursue their own benefit, it will *definitely* become a [prison sentence of 5 years].

If one of them betrays the other and confesses, the one who confessed will be [released] and the one who remained silent will receive a [prison sentence of 10 years].

Then the option of keeping quiet——in actuality, doesn't exist.

There's no other choice but to bet on the possibility the other will remain quiet while confessing. By doing that——

At worst, the [prison sentence of 10 years] can be evaded, if lucky, they'll be [released].

——This is the reason it's called a dilemma.

On top of that, in this game, the Old Deus had politely told them——there was a [traitor].

Using that example, it would be the same as saying [however, one has already confessed].

If someone had already betrayed before the game even started, then believing each other was——"impossible(meaningless)".

"So that's why you said to betray? Isn't that exactly what the [detective] wants?!"

Indeed, it's meaningless to believe in each other and there's no other choice besides betraying each other.

But isn't doing that exactly what the [detective]——what the Old Deus wanted?

——That "pointing straight out the heart of the problem" attitude really wasn't like her at all.

But, she wasn't even aware she was doing it so Sora laughed——and corrected her.

"No, that's exactly what we want. In truth, this example *doesn't establish itself as a dilemma*, you see."

"………………What?"

"By betraying and believing in each other, instead of the 'better result', we get the 'best result'♪"

Sora and Shiro gave a thin smile onminously distorted——that is, and continued.

This game——No, this game, *too*.

Sora and Shiro, Imanity's strongest gamer, [　　](Kuuhaku)'s, policy, their existence itself revealed everything.

Both past and future, no matter the opponent, it was an unwavering fact of the present——Namely.

"No matter what game it is, even before starting——"

“……We’ve already won…… that’s…… all.”

They pulled everything into their hands and all attempts were within it.

Not even god was missing from the compilation thread——

The eyes of the two who arrogantly said that, fearlessly and irreverently, saw Steph’s trembling shoulders and——

“…………Well, that’s only if we’re able to see the end of the game, right…… hahaha, haa……”

“…………Shiro…… can’t stand it, anymore…… want to…… go home……”

——————.

——The next moment, they could see her shoulders dropping.

In Sora and Shiro’s sharp and irreverent eyes——in their eyes that moved unconsciously.

It was the hard truth they avoided looking directly upon——Basically, it captured the [Game Board] in the sky.

In an instant, they left behind a voice tired of a cloudy life and sank into the cargo.

“……Ah, Uhm. If you’re going to act cool, then, could you please do it until the very end?”

Strength suddenly left Steph and she panted with her eyes half open, but, Sora declared inside his heart.

[*Death(Defeat)*]——*through the loss of all dice is——**impossible.***

*Losing due to stealing and betrayal is——even more **impossible**.*

But——

“The stealing and betrayal ‘doesn’t matter’ you know…… there’s a different cause of loss for us.”

With a raping eye, he threw away everything that happened until now saying it “doesn’t matter.”

But, without giving Steph any time to process, Sora, with a pensive expression——continued.

“……But really, this isn’t even funny; that really is the most probable——ending(defeat)……”

Gazing at the interminably giant [Game Board], he spoke.

It was——

“——————[Starvation.]”

——.

————It was urgent.

They felt inside a cruel and merciless silence…… but.

"……E~Eeehh? Ahm…… What do you mean?"

"Ha, haha…… I vaguely doubted it, but, you really haven't noticed? ……"

"…………Ignorance is bliss…… those are profound words…… right……"

Towards Steph who was tilting her neck, Sora and Shiro smiled——but, with eyes of a dead fish——

"Ah, attention all passengers~! Could you please look to your left~?"

Even though the ones riding on something were Sora and Shiro.

Steph turned her gaze to beyond Sora's left hand, who was extending it like a bus guide.

What laid beyond it was "land" ——and the Eastern Union's countless islands visible on the ocean.

——It was on the left. Not below or above. There was a land to their left.

"Continuing, could you please look to your right~? ——Now, I wonder what do you see?"

What she saw was what the Old Deus had created, the absurdly huge——[Sugoroku] game board.

The continent(square) floated on air without any support, drew a spiral, pierced the clouds, and stretched high into the sky.

——It was something that's seen a lot on television games where the stage was set in a fantasy world.

A load of rock going against gravity and floating on air——a field where one walks forward atop it.

Be it F〇9's last dungeon or Ra〇n or Ji〇 Kingdom[4], well, anything is fine.

Now then, walking above that rock, let's slowly try to turn it sideways by 90°.

If it obeys common sense, we would fall. But since this lacks common sense, let's assume we won't fall.

That stupid load of rock goes around picking a fight with gravity, pretending to be a [square]. After each of them stretch itself to the size of a city, extending throughout space, overlapping a few hundreds of them in a spiral ——The boldness of it to pretend it's a [Sugoroku Board] ——Well, you see the image, right?

The impression leaving your mouth, even though you try to hide it, wasn't [beautiful] even by mistake——

"……………… It's an absurdly huge game board ……"

That's right, it's absurd. It's also huge.

"Ye~s it's an absurdly huge game board! Now, what's our current position after we've walked for *five hours*!?"

"…………The second square, right."

Yes, the second square——In other words, they were on the [second rock].

"That's~~ ri~ght~! Basing on the above——Now! Let's fully answer the question that you asked when you broke through the house's door a while ago!!——In other words! 'Why did we confine ourselves there?'!!"

After sucking in an incredibly long breath.

"It's too uselessly huge and slowwwwww! If we crossed a single square after walking for five hours——Just how many days, how many months will it take until we set foot on the dice's outcome, the [62nd] square~!"

——*aree, ree……*

…… *ee……*

In the space called uselessly broad.

Sora's useless complaint uselessly piled up echoes…… and uselessly disappeared vainly.

"It's the Old Deus' game, so, it's obvious it'll be ridiculous……"

Indeed, Sora scorned at Steph's cursing as she pulled the cart.

"Haahn!! She must be a really shitty game maker to mistake a map uselessly big and cool as something interesting. Did she think replacing [money(development costs)] with [power] would complete a spectacularly shitty game(this)!?"

That's exactly what you'd normally think of when a capital is purposely created in the sky of a fantasy world.

Indeed, it's impossible to imagine how much power was necessary to make something like that possible——But.

Why! Especially! Must that continent! Float in the sky!

To sell a good fight with gravity is definitely a [waste of power] when there's no need to.

Sora affirmed before the deed that could literally be called a [work of God].

——*Wouldn't a virtual space be enough?*

"Moreover, even with all these fields, there not even a 'straight road railway', and as if that wasn't enough, 'the road is long' ……this is the worst landmine pretending to be an open world……"

——In the end, it isn't load-free.

About two hours ago——before Sora and Shiro declared it to be an [impossible game] and confined themselves.

While aiming for the outcome of the dice——the [62nd] square, they walked away for five hours.

After finally crossing the first square, at the square’s end——he stood at the division of the land.

They moved onto the next square with the time used in a cup noodles’ timer.

As they moved onto the [second square], Shiro, faintly breathing——murmured.

——[…… The number of footsteps, until here…… were 20,834 steps……]

Mathematics, too, were out of Sora’s area of expertise, but, any words beyond that point was unnecessary.

Shiro’s current height was 131cm——her step length was about 0.48m[5].

The size of one square calculated from there is——surprisingly, about [10km[6]].

The several kilometers between each square is moved through teleportation. The [ascending squares] are excluded as crossing isn’t necessary.

This game board piercing the heavens in a spiral has——[350] squares——In other words.

“……It’s [3,500km[7]] until the goal…… walking with your own feet. Without any fast travel.”

Seeing Steph’s expression as if it still hadn’t hit her, Sora turned towards her with a difficult smile.

Then, will she get it if I say it this way?

That it’s almost the same distance as ***crossing America*** *or* ***making a full lap around Honshu*** *in Japan——No……?*

For an inhabitant of this world, I should make this kind of comparison, huh.

“……It’s the same as going from Elkia’s western border to the Temple of the Priestess(Kannagari)——do you get it this way?”

After Sora said that, this time for sure, the lights disappeared from Steph’s eyes.

There’s no way for Steph to not know about it when she was in charge of politics, diplomacy, and trade.

It was a distance even Elkia’s open sea sailing ship which took pride in its max speed would take on average——half a month.

Naturally during that time, it’ll be on off-roads, outdoors, in direct sunlight; furthermore, if the dice decreases, with a ***child’s feet****.*

With such conditions, you’d ask ‘Why did you confine yourself?’

If I had to say it, it was a question as stupid as asking why do moles dive into the ground——

"……This game. If you have only one die left, *you cannot proceed any further*. Basically, unless someone ascends or everyone has only one die left without reaching zero——*it won't end.*"

It was a super drawn out war game continuing endlessly……

The more it's prolonged, the greater the probability of everyone losing——besides that absurd living being(Jibril) who needs no food or sleep.

Yes, he let out a dry smile that was almost giving a rustling sound.

Why did Sora forget about it all, threw everything away, and confined himself? ——He now announced the reason.

"For starters, there's no way we can walk such a distance, right!? I'm a flesh and blood human, you see!? For a person, a living being who gets hungry and tired, it's a distance that would normally and inevitably kill him!!!"

——In the distant past, starting from the southern end of Africa, humanity had crossed the majestic Eurasia.

It's said they reached the New Continent(Americas) beyond the Pacific Ocean by going along Indonesia on a wooden boat.

But, the strength of such a primordial humanity had long since been lost by its descendants.

Much less when it led to the poster child of civilization——the hikikomori gamer, there isn't even a residue left.

One square…… They almost died walking 10km——this is the modern human. This is reality.

It didn't matter if they already confirmed their victories before the game even started.

That only *applied if they managed to see it to the end,* right?

Low physical abilities, due to the time elapsed, elements unrelated to the game itself——"self-destruction".

To Sora and them, this was the most unreasonable, therefore realistic, hypothetical conclusion(defeat) they could expect.

Once again facing despair with Shiro, he glanced at Steph who just now also fell into the same despair.

He smiled bitterly, suddenly, the protagonist's speech of that game floated once again in the back of his brain.

——[I wonder…… where did I go wrong……]

He answered Steph's question about *why he had confined himself,* but——it was different.

——They're challenging a god.

——They're in the middle of mutual betrayal.

——They lose their life if all their dice is lost.

——They lose their life if they get defeated.

Even if such fearful sentences were heard and lined together——

——*They'll die if they get hungry.*

Before this single too realistic line——and therefore, *easily understandable* sense of danger.

Sora questioned *that*, which allowed him to put everything else aside with just a "it doesn't matter."

——*Just where did I go wrong to agree with such a rule?*

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——Still on the second square.

Nine hours had passed from the start of the game…… there was quietness.

Inside the long and continuing silence, all that echoed were the rustling of trees and the chirping of birds.

The sound of the cart wheels rolling couldn't be heard anymore.

Before the irrefutable reality, even Steph had stopped pulling the cart and crouched down.

Confronted with reality once more, Sora laid in the cart and watched the dusk without moving an inch.

Contrary to the calm scenery, if that view was made into a painting and a title is added on——it'd be [The End].

But, a small voice above Sora's chest rejected decorating a museum with it.

——Until now, it was only working endlessly.

The small hope was using the tablet PC the entire time, with the resolution to exhaust the battery.

"………………Nii…… I finished, calculating……"

Saying so, she showed the dazzling tablet PC's screen to her brother——with a smile shining several times more.

——Showing to her brother a hope that released more light than the stars.

“**——Woaaaaahhhh damn yeah!!** Both the Old Deus and Tet should just eat shit!!! Ah, whose line was it again? ——God is always in my heart——or more specifically, on my chest!!”

“Hyaaaaah w-w-what’s going on! I-It hurts, you know!?”

Sora had raised a strange voice from above the cart while carrying his little sister, correction, a goddess, up.

The cart tilted and the handle had bounced strongly and hit Steph in the face.

But, he was sure the “harm” would be treated as “negligence” by the [Ten Oaths] ——therefore!

Sora splendidly ignored her protests, giving Shiro a piggyback ride, he smiled and turned the tablet to Steph.

——He should’ve apologized for the negligence but, since those two were the antonyms of common sense, Steph made a resigned face——

“……A ‘world map’? What are those…… *red, oblique lines?*”

“The map of this game board——It’s the drawing of the ‘part of the land the Old Deus copied’!”

The [first square] they crossed and the currently [second square] ——

The two and the potential squares forming the spiral were joined together as seen from the land drawn on the map.

Shiro indexed the distance ratio and the spacing of all 350 squares and, just in case, the overall length of 3,500km.

It was a map that indexed this game board, *copied from the land,* from its *starting point* to the *end.*

“……This…… Is it really something that great?”

Seeing such a pitiful and ordinary person who couldn’t understand the feat of the goddess, Sora screamed appalled.

“Y-You, look carefully——There are no mountains, straits, or deserts!! Not to mention, this is a farming region!?”

——Exactly, if one goes by the map Shiro indexed.

This game board was the Eastern Union’s former continental territory——north-northeast from the center of the Lusia[8] continent.

Grazing the Inviolable Area(Sanctuary), it crossed the territory of Elven Garde and lead to Elkia.

With Sora and the other’s equipment…… the terrain wasn’t “physically impossible for one to travel by foot”!

Even more so——this [second square] was Eastern Union’s former territory that’s now Elkia’s farming region on the southeast border.

“Then, we still have a survival route(chance to win)——!!”

Sora, who had overcome despair, was ready start walking, jumped down from the cart while carrying Shiro.

I see, it still won't change that it's a journey of 3,500km.

ここまで♡
？
ここから

Although unfortunate, we don't have any residue of the old humanity's strength——but.

"In that case, let's just go like a modern person would. With the method of *making something else walk for us!!*"

"It's about me, right, it's about me, isn't it!?"

"Listen to me, cart horse! It's about catching a 'leg' and making it pull the cart!"

"As expected, it's really about me, isn't it! You said 'cart horse' just now, didn't you, so you already caught one!!"

Putting aside Steph who making a fuss, Sora picked up something stacked in the cart——In other words.

"Alright, Shiro——Let's go 'capture(bag)' a horse or maybe a cow."

"……Got it…… Understood……"

He let a dangerous smile float on his face as he held a hoe and a rope.

"Y-You're going to steal!? That's——N-No, good or bad thing aside, with the [Ten Oaths] it's——"

But, the restricting voice of common sense was answered with the smiling embodiment of the lack of.

"……Hey, how about you look back to our actions until now?"

Property invasion, unauthorized use of equipment.

The presumption is——

"Even you 'stole' that cart and committed 'property destruction' by flashily destroying that door, right?"

"——Gahh! ……H-Huh?"

Steph finally seemed to have noticed and Sora smiled bitterly.

——If the Old Deus created this game board(land) from nothing, then——*it's not supposed to have a house.*

But, "gouging it" from the ground wouldn't end with just an uproar on rights infringement, it'd violate the [Oaths].

Even if it's an Old Deus, the [Ten Oaths] are absolute, then this place——

"It's a stage the Old Deus 'copied' from the ground…… everything existing here is a 'replica' of what's on the ground and as such, it's no one's possession——That's why the [Ten Oaths] didn't apply."

——*Therefore, there aren't any other Exceeds(people), targets of the [Oaths], in this place besides the game participants.*

——Therefore, there are living beings exempt from the [Oaths] here——like birds, trees, and since it's a farming region, cows and horses.

With the exception of the participants——you're free to burn or cook everything inside this game!

"There~fore! Let's first go catch a 'leg' to tie to this cart and make it pull it."

……*Although, doing that isn't as simple as saying,* but, he swallowed those words.

"Ah, so you really didn't plan to make me pull it all the way……"

"……Are you thinking that I'm the kind of person who would make someone pull a cart for 3,500km?"

"I thought so without a doubt until a while ago. Now, I've slightly changed my opinion of you."

"You know…… If I did that, you would become exhausted, right……"

——If he were to commit such a mistake——

"Then who would pull the cart next!? You should try to think with some common sense!!"

"Isn't that right~❤ I knew it, let's just say goodbye to that change of opinion ♪"

——Everything was decided by games——It was a world Tet reasoned was a utopia.

It was extremely unwilling the two hikikomoris accepted physical labor.

——But, if it was to win the game, then, it couldn't be helped.

If it's made into a demonstration in the previous world, they wouldn't even confine themselves, thinking flexibly.

……Sighing, looking to the left outside the game——gazing at the ground surface of the sea, Sora stood alone.

"Speaking of which, I wonder when Kurami and Fiel will be joining *this game.*"

"What? It's a game starting by 'pledging to the oaths', right? They can't join in the middle of——"

"I'll be troubled if they don't. Besides, *intruding* in the middle of a game is a form of art, right?"

Steph asked dubiously, but Sora answered meaningfully while only smiling——

"——Alright, I wonder which farm animal will thereby become Imanity's sacrifice?"

“……Nii…… Shiro, likes horses…… but, like cows, even more……”

Making the rope creak, Sora and Shiro looked around for a target not included in the [Ten Oaths] ——Essentially.

They were searching for a pitiful livestock stripped of its [right to live], becoming prey for the Sixteen Races(Exceed)——

“……Shiro, Shiro~…… won’t you wipe your drool……?”

Steph’s eyes, seeing the predators(two), changed into the way one looks at demons, but——she was ignored.

Overwork them as legs, eat them when starving——!! That was why it was limited to horses or cows.

This game, the first and absolute condition was *to live*…… it’s time to show the humans’ dirty way of living……!

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

A large flower bloomed in the open sea.

The giant flower spread its petals on the sea’s surface as if to cover and conquer the waves——it was a [ship].

There wasn’t a mast or a paddle, not even the sound of a propeller, much less a flag indicating its affiliation, but.

The flower bed’s carving trajectory on the sea’s surface——That diverse scenic view eloquently spoke of its affiliation.

——Elven Garde.

Woven with the magic of the Elves——riding on the drifting “fragrance” instead of water——a flower.

Floating above the flower, the land, the sea, making flowers bloom to further advance, the *floating flower*——[Flower Vessel(Vár Pullum)[9]].

It wasn’t just a single ship elegantly and soundlessly conquering the harsh ocean.

A countless number of flower vessels(Vár Pullums) from the west turned toward the eastern sea and were now crossing the ocean.

They formed orderly ranks, speeds aligned, and their trajectory drawing multicolored flowers on the sea’s surface.

They formed a giant fleet(flower garden) extending for dozens of kilometers, from the first one to the last one.

Large, red roses was leading the fleet——a single flower vessel(Vár Pullum).

On the bow of that vessel was a black haired human figure.

The sea breeze disturbing her black hair and veil, the dark girl glaring sharply at her destination was——

“………… *hik-choo*”

She was repeatedly letting out a cute sneeze.

“*Hi——hik-choo*! I-It’s cold…… it’s cold here, Fii!?”

“Kurami—? Stop trying to look cool and come inside~You’ll catch a cold, you know?”

She said towards the black-haired Imanity girl trembling with her nose running——to Kurami Zell.

The golden-haired Elf girl, Fiel Nirvalen, hugged her closer and spread her shawl.

While coming down from the bow, the black-haired girl asked.

“Uu…… a-and then, Fii? Just how much longer it looks like it will take?”

“Hm~ with this progress…… it seems it’ll take more than half a month~”

“Ugh…… even though it’s a distance that normally wouldn’t take even an entire day to reach……”

“It’s a flower vessel(antique), you know? It took time to both gather them and make them move~”

——*I know that.*

Going by air, not sea——The Elves’ principle transport, any place on earth would be like their “neighborhood”.

For Elves, something like a *ship moving above water* was nothing more than an obsolete antique of a distant past.

But now, these slow antiques were extremely necessary——Kurami clicked her tongue.

——It must’ve been a few months since she started acting separated from Sora and the others.

Meanwhile, she endlessly piled the collapse of Elven Garde——the culmination was this.

The greatest marine trade port in the Elven territory——Tilnog, where influential merchants and related companies established a force in the province, reaching even the Govenor.

She tricked them into a game then, gripping their weaknesses, changed the leaders and silently attacked them.

In order to transfer the Senate and make the province move, she even took the majority of the guilds, the House, and the Senate’s consent vote.

——Everything was for this moment.

——For this occasion(timing) when *those two* were challenging the Old Deus.

For the sake of the siblings moving far beyond the assumption, she too, had to accomplish quite the impossible.

That also applied to the numberless dangerous bridges she had to *run through* ——But——

“……If we don’t make it in time, it’ll all go down the drain——if that happens, then everything will——”

“It’ll be too late for anything…… I understand that, Kurami……”

Fiel hugged Kurami, who was biting her nails from impatience, as she replied as if to soothe her.

——*That’s right. This game* ***won’t end*** *without us——no.*

Kurami glared at the giant land floating on the horizon——the Old Deus’ game board and bit her lips.

The destination she was leading the huge fleet to was below it——the Eastern Union.

In the spiral’s center——She *won’t allow it to end* without her in the center of the game.

“……Fii, can you see what those two are doing right now?”

“Yes I can~ *Obviously,* I can see it~♪”

At Kurami’s words, the irises of Fiel’s eyes and the gem on her forehead glowed faintly.

Her tone of voice and smile spoke of her extremely natural, yet, arrogant confidence.

——With her using the Six Layers Formula(hexacaster), there’s no event within the horizon she couldn’t see through.

……But.

“I ‘see’ them, you see~ but, I don’t really~ understand ‘what they are doing’.”

“……Huh? What does that mean?”

“Hmm, they’re stabbing a horse with a rod——ah, they found a stray dog ——now they’re running while crying.”

……………………

“————————Really, those guys, just what the hell are they doing?”

Not even Fiel could see the answer for that question, which Kurami accidentally let out.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——The 34th square…… it’s been forty-two hours since the start of the game.

[The square(This place)] the horse-drawn cart loaded with Sora, Shiro and Steph was running through a moist plateau.

According to Shiro's map, the duplicated surface was a farther eastern surface of Elkia's reclaimed eastern territory.

The Forest of Spirits——a land virtually grazing on the territory of the Elementals, known as the [Inviolable Area(Sanctuary)].

——Now. Sora had no way of knowing about the murmur faraway on the horizon, but.

While the cart swayed violently, Sora started thinking suddenly, *just what the hell am I doing?*

I'm playing a game against an Old Deus? I'm surviving? ——No.

If he had to say it, then——he would be [philosophizing]. The theme was…… correct, it was about "rights" ——

——The [Ten Oaths].

It guaranteed the rights, while forbidding all kinds of killing and pillaging ——basically, the [Violation of Rights].

But——"living" by itself meant infringing upon someone else's rights.

…… No one can live alone. They cause trouble for each other and protect each other.

By violating each other's small rights, holding others' rights, having their own rights taken——they finally "live".

And——there'll be a time where they'll ***definitely reach a certain line*** *which they must definitely protect.*

The clash between that [contradiction]——those two incompatible rights(claims) couldn't be avoided.

That's why the Oaths ***avoided it****——That contradiction(conflicts) should be solved through intelligence(games), not force(war).*

But, still——as long as one is "living," that fundamental contradiction cannot be solved.

The contradiction where one can't live if they don't eat(kill)——if one doesn't violate the maximum rights(life), one can't maintain the minimum rights(life).

That's why the Oaths ***solved it****——The guarantee of rights only apply to intelligent lifeforms(Exceed).*

That's why the right to eat anything besides the Sixteen Races(Exceed) was guaranteed——it solved even that fundamental contradiction.

Aah, just how wonderful the [Ten Oaths] are——!!

——But, I want to wait a little on that praising.

Aren't the [rights] that are being guaranteed——something that was worked out mutually?

Isn't the [right] to not be harmed, at the same time, a [duty] to not harm?

Then, wasn't ***the [right] to harm****, at the same time, a* ***[duty] to be harmed****?*

Ahh…… how profound, Sora indulged, deeply moved.

"Free will and rights carry responsibility and duty"……in the previous world(Earth), those words are still being discussed.

But, in this world——if one puts it in a simpler and easily understandable way.

It can be expressed with a single sentence——In other words!

————***[You can eat if you want, but, don't complain if you get eaten, alright!?] ……***

"Uwooooahhhhhh! Hey, can't you raise the cart's speed!?"

"It's a cart made in a hurry, you know!? If the speed is raised even more, it'll flip and fall downnnn!"

"……N-Nii……! Fire, need more…… fire……!"

Behind the sprinting cart——was a swarm of *monsters in pursuit* while baring their fangs and claws.

Sora——Maybe it was the last time he held that philosophy in his heart.

He was swinging and throwing torches, struggling hard while clinging to his life.

——They chased a horse, was pursued by a dog, and after painfully managing to repel it, they captured the horse.

While making full use of Steph's riding skill, Shiro's design skill, and Sora's precarious Sunday Carpentry skills, by the time they somehow managed to make a substitute that could possibly be a cart, eighteen hours went by.

At the end of the struggle worth a volume of a book, they left the reigns to Steph and sprawled in the cart.

The sound of the cart's wheels turning lightly acting as a lullaby, they fell into a mud-like sleep——both of them saw a dream.

They had broken through a hurdle they considered to be an impossible game and a pleasant journey started……

Like the saying, "Dreams are fragile things" ——Really, it was so fragile, it already collapsed a few hours ago.

The cause was what they saw when they heard Steph's scream and looked behind——it was due to "hell(that)".

Like the swarm of death crossing the [12th square] in pursuit and now——

"Hey!! Could it be if you take one step outside the city in this world, it's a world of serious swords and magic!? I'll complain about that Tet bastard to JAR〇[10] for such deceptive advertising saying 'A utopia where everything is decided by games' you know!?"

——Sora shouted after painfully experiencing the [Fantasy World] for his first time.

But, it was a field where one's heart seemed about to break just proceeding through that square.

Even so, they thought there was still hope if it wasn't on a terrain impossible to cross by foot…… but.

They didn't hear anything about "Monster Encounter: ON" ——!!

The distance between the monsters and them were closing in and the hastily made cart was making noises, like it was about to fall apart.

If that happened, the only fate left for them would be…… a dead-end route as [food]……

"Normally, there's no such monsters like thissss! Just where is this place!?"

"……We're currently…… in the Inviolable Area(Sanctuary)…… near, the 'Forest of Spirits'……"

"Ah! Good news, Sora! The reason they're appearing is because we're on the outskirts of the 'Forest of Spirits'! If we leave this place, we'll be fin——like I've been saying, please don't try to jump down from the cart!!"

"……Nii…… Nii, stay alive……"

Sora, due to having too much fear, was about to unconsciously let go of his life and breathed roughly.

——Calm down.

When they were thrown into a super fantasy world——How did the people from another world survive?

……The trend was use the ultimate cheat of fighting with a chosen power or something similar…… isn't that right?

But…… Sora took a single glance at the monsters pursuing them and smiled bitterly.

Here we have a hikikomori sheltered girl and a clearly obvious NEET gamer.

They didn't have any experience with such primitive killing intent directed at them, much less being chased as food.

In modern-day Japan, just what kind of lifestyle would one need in order to grow enough guts to face these monsters head on?

——A cheat-like sword technique? Cheat magic? Or was it superpowers?
——Wrong, right.

It's wrong, isn't it, it wasn't like that, right, definitely none!

Humans——we——aren't a race that fights like that, right——!?

Facing the oncoming death, Sora put more strength into the hand holding his little sister's.

"……Shiro. If I return to Elkia…… I'll make them develop the technology of [sniper rifles] ……"

With distant eyes, he raised such a flag.

——It would *from a distance, one-sidedly, without allowing counterattacks, certainly, reliably*——kill them.

That's how the animal called human fought, Sora was convinced of that——but.

"……Rejected……"

She instantly rejected her older brother's proposal.

"……Nii, how about we *burn this place*……? Let's drop highly efficient explosives on it…… C6N12H6O12(Hexanitrohexaazaisowurtzitane)[11], every day?"

Sora felt a shiver at the suggestion she made with her eyes shining unnaturally.

——Don't say something as naïve as firearms.

——Shall we burn down this forest every day from now on?

——Let's just bomb this area with an aircraft, plow it and turn it into an empty land?

She's really a genius, huh——As expected of my prided little sister.

Right, that's exactly how humans——

————An impact.

His thoughts escaping out of control were brought back to reality.

The reality where the claw drawn by one of the monsters teared through the wooden cart like butter.

Hmm, it seems like it really won't end up simply as a joke, he thought.

"My bad, Shiro…… seems like I messed up somehow. It really seems to be 'Game Over'."

Murmuring that, Sora started analyzing the result, the reason of their defeat with no light in his eyes.

——*Where did I go wrong?*

For challenging God? Did he take the handicap known as survival too lightly?

Or was it that he dared to be born even though he was just a mere virgin?

——

While Sora was fading into dusk with a dry smile, Shiro quietly spoke.

“……Nii…… how does it feel…… to die, while still a virgin……?”

“Ah~…… It’s a regret so huge, it makes me feel like dying, to say the least…… haha……”

Aaah…… humans are weak.

They lose and lose again, keep losing, then they bite the dust in disappointment, just to look back at the cause of their loss, full of regret.

Even so, they still think “next time, next time without fail” and keep walking forward——until the day they finally win arrives.

Sora collected his reflections and problems——*In the next world(Next), first, let’s aim to graduate from being a virgin.*

I have no clue how I’ll do that, but…… well, let’s entrust that to the me of the next world. Fight.

——Sora threw out his limbs with no strength, finishing the conclusion(result) of his life.

“Nii……”

Sitting across from Sora, Shiro whispered thinly.

With a distance so even her breathing could be felt, she lowered her face to hide her red-dyed cheeks.

“……Then…… before dying…… since it’ll happen, anyway……”

Shiro exposed her white skin underneath her clothes while her moist eyes were burning——

——*Now, then. Sora the virgin, age of death: 18 years old.*

What should be done normally in this situation——his immediate reply: do nothing.

It’s Shiro. His little sister. 11 years old——right now, she’s down by two dice so, provisionally 8.8 years old.

Would there be an uproar over how she’s out of elements for that role or drop into a preach about a maiden’s skin?

But——facing real death before him, Sora asserted without even noticing he was confused and confirmed.

——It was in a weekend movie theater.

Those shitty people satisfied with their real lives deliberately have sex when under extreme life or death situations.

The mood breaking behaviors of the viewers and the production, Sora was doubting for quite a while.

It would be fine if they just died like that, or so he thought——but, he was the one who was wrong.

I see——Those guys…… everyone——

——***They were all virgins——!***

If I'm going to entrust it to the next world, then, certainly, I would think about it before dying, right!?

Sympathizing with Hollywood more than ever, Sora extended his hands towards the warm skin before him.

"Hey, you thereee! What are you doing in the rear at such a time————"

It happened in an instant.

Twice——a roaring sound resounded, making the cart jump as the group dance in the air.

What happened——without even being granted time to consider the question, he hugged Shiro on reflex.

Falling to the ground, rolling with the momentum…… he raised his head while in pain and saw.

——The real monster was here.

A huge crater was drawn in a perfect circle in the soft humus[12] ground.

In its center——there was a single monster exhausted, breathing heavily.

It was a young, small, and cute beast with the appearance of a human on all four limbs with their head tilted——

"……I won't share Izuna's meal, desu! S-Sora is the one at fault, desu!!"

The little girl was dressed in a kimono with fennec-like ears, shouldering a rucksack while swinging her big tail.

Facing their way while glaring with her eyes half-closed while in a bad mood was——Hatsuse, Izuna, but.

…………

"……Hey, let me hear about the reason you said such monsters *shouldn't* be here?"

He confirmed the safety of Shiro in his arms with her eyes spinning, then checked his own body.

That he was almost unharmed was almost a miracle, considering he fell off a running out of control cart.

Seeing Steph hadn't suffered any big injuries, either, Sora——asked a question he could already guess.

"……Nearly all large animals became extinct during the [Great War] ……

The rest is just like you've guessed——"

——As for what happened, the current situation explained it all.

The "one step" Izuna took——the ground shook.

Next, a single punch——no, a "one stroke" ——made the ground roll up and changed into a crater.

Most likely, she *attacked* what she called a [meal], although——it no longer retained its original form.

The swarm of monsters ran away without even a single one left behind——just like how small spiders scatter.

That was only natural, so long as the peak of the food chain——[the predator(Izuna)] was there.

"Excluding Imanity, the other races…… predations and defenses, *various outbursts of anger*——yes, well……"

Indeed, said Sora, looking up at the sky.

[Rights] are something that worked out mutually, and, at the same time, it was a duty.

But——as for whether those rights and duties were guaranteed or not, without the Oaths——

"……Nii, this world…… isn't gentle…… with anyone, other than…… the Sixteen Races(Exceed), right……"

As the ones who escaped from becoming prey, Sora and Shiro thought——*Humans are calculating living beings.*

To think they would feel pity for the ones threatening their lives just a little while ago.

Would that be the ego of the survivors, they wondered……

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

"I-I really don't get it, desu! I-Izuna is angry, desu!?"

……*Though, if you really insist, it's not like I can't share it.*

Seeing Izuna's eyes wavering like that, Sora and Shiro raised their thumbs with a smile——

"……It's, fine…… Izuna-tan, is…… our savior…… and besides……"

"To eat something like this——as a human, let's think about it when we're on the brink of starvation, alright?"

They refreshingly refused the creature that was something out of a bio〇zard.[13]

——A few minutes ago.

While lifting up the cart, Sora questioned Izuna sitting formally in front of her prey.

"……Hey Izuna. Why did you kill only a single one?"

——Just like Sora and the others, starvation was also a danger for the Warbeasts(Izuna).

You would want to secure even a bit more food, wouldn't you, Sora asked so.

"It's forbidden to hunt for more than you need…… it's a bad thing, desu."

Saying so, Izuna——It must be an etiquette of the Eastern Union.

She politely joined her fists and bowed, deeply thanking the life she took.

Seeing that appearance, both Shiro and Sora, and even Steph——they honestly felt ashamed.

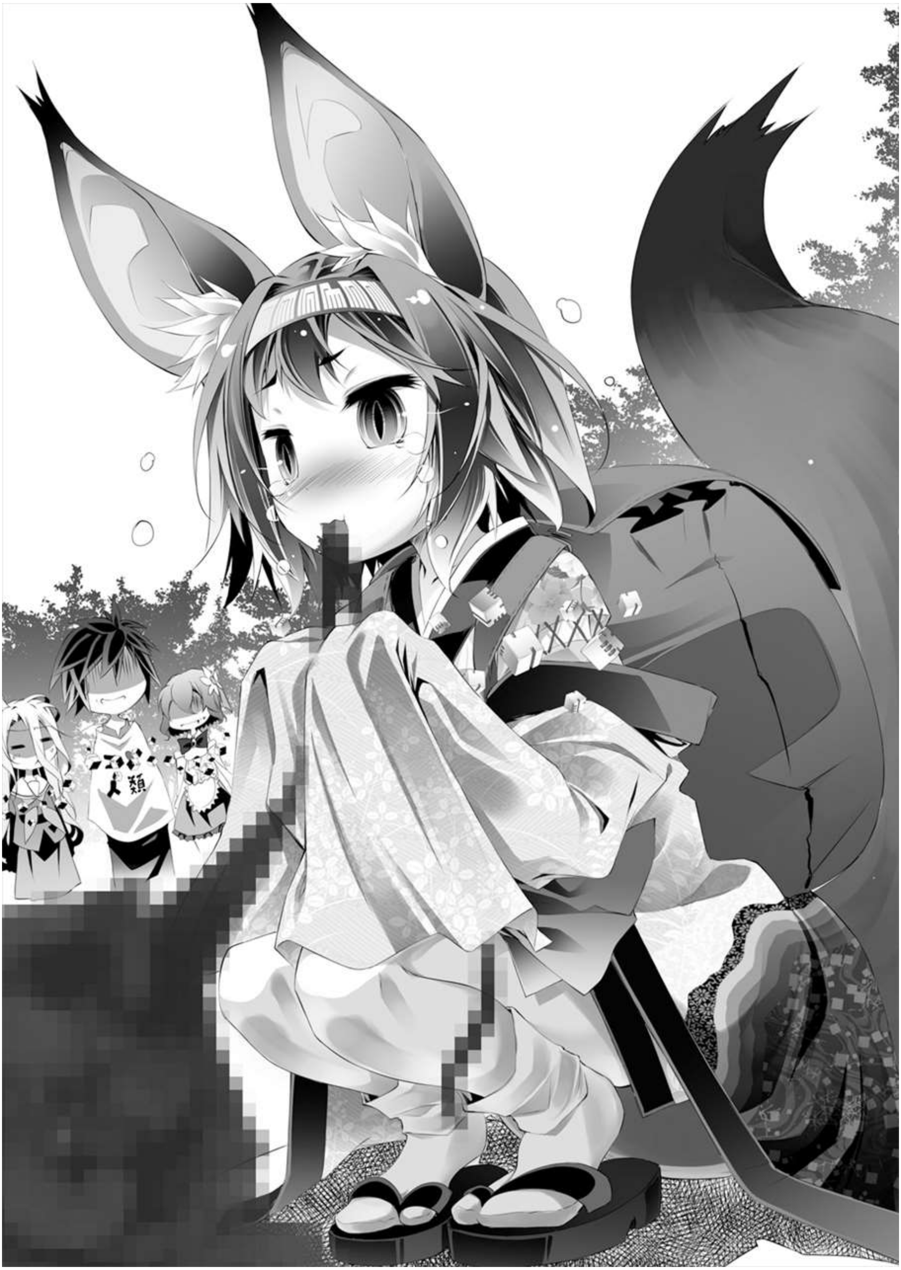
Those who lived surrounded by civilization tend to forget that meals were the ingestion of another life.

Was that girl just really attentive to her food education or was she a saint——

"*Spit*!? Y-You, you taste so damn bad to an unbelievable degree, desu!? Just what did you eat to grow into this【*BEEP*】's【*BEEP*】of a taste that's almost like【*BEEP*】, desu!?"

——A single bite.

They really would've thought like that if it weren't for all the booing and spitting ruining everything.


人類

"H-Hey…… as expected, no matter how you look at it, it's not edible, right……"

"I-If you hunt it, then you must eat it all no matter what, desu! …… *sob*……"

Yeah, while Izuna's face distorted with large tears, *let's at least do this much as thanks for saving our lives.*

They sorted out their feelings and took out some spices from the luggage bag——

"Let's cook this…… wait, for starters, just what would this be!? W-Where should I start considering——Rather, is it really fine to eat this!? Hiiiih, S-Sora! Some weird, blue liquid has——!"

——They made Steph do it and heard screams raised for a long time.

If a Werebeast's sense of smell determined it was edible, then it must be——Sora and Shiro were feeling sorry about it, but……

Thus, Steph handled grilling the skewered meat around a bonfire.

"……Anyway, Izuna, why are you still in this kind of place?"

Their current position was on the [38^{th} square], almost 380km[14] from the starting position.

Around Izuna's chest were nine dice——though her age decreased by one-tenth.

With that overwhelming physical ability…… to them——it's unthinkable her speed was inferior to a horse's.

Izuna, who was supposed to be much further ahead, just growled at the question with her eyes half-opened.

"……Izuna is angry, desu…… [Answer the choice Sora playfully took when picking a bride during his first playthrough of Dragon F5.] ……It's obvious, Sora was the one who wrote this task, desu!!"

Ahh…… understanding, Sora and Shiro laughed.

The【Task】that Sora wrote——In other words, it was placed "on the 38th square(here)".

Naturally, it meant she hadn't been able to answer and, in the end, was [forced to wait seventy-two hours].

And after seventy-two hours have passed, one die will be stolen by the Question Master(Sora)——

Maybe her anger came back after remembering it since Izuna stood up and suddenly growled intimidatingly.

“I don’t get it at all, desu! Give me the rules and follow them, desu!!”

[image]**12: However, all【Tasks】that include any of the following will be considered invalid:**

> **12b: Instructions impossible to accomplish by anyone besides the Question Master or impossible for any of the Players.**

That’s right, the rules certainly defined it like that——but.

“O~iii, oi…… you failed, it’s a real failure, you know? Oh dear kemonomimi. Shiro~?”

Giving a nod, Shiro took out her cellphone——answering while typing in a way Izuna wouldn’t understand.

——[Ludman].

“Super correct!! *Shiro also knows*——that’s why this【Task】is valid, you see♪”

——Any task that cannot be accomplished by anyone or only by the Question Master are invalid.

For example, if Jibril were to write something like [Perform a spatial shift with your own power].

Or maybe [Answer your year of death(future)] and so on, it was a rule forbidding impossible instructions.

But, on the other side——It meant *it’ll be valid so long as it’s possible for at least one more person.*

“Ah, putting it simply!? The other【Tasks】I wrote——like [Answer the name of the three MODs where you kill the f*cking b*tches who ordered to kill Paarthurnax[15]] or [Answer the title of the first exciting and heart-pounding landmine(eroge) Sora purchased in commemoration of his 18th anniversary]!? Without knowledge of the other world——no, even if you had the knowledge, it’d still be super improbable you could answer are all OK!! Under~stand!?”

Sora answered, dancing with a face similar to as if he had smacked Siddartha[16] once with the palm of his hand.

“……Nii, you’re so dirty…… super, cool……”

“——You’re the worst…… it’s just obvious for Izuna to be angry……”

Looks of admiration and gazes as if seeing something filthy poured onto him——But.

“*It’s following the rules*——it finished grilling, Izuna. I hope it’s a little better, but.”

Seeing Izuna’s pouting face, Sora laughed and extended out the skewer——in an instant.

"……It's a little better now, desu. It changed from damn bad to simply bad, desu."

After she stuffed the skewered meat into her mouth, her mood became better and her tail started swinging.

"…………"

Steph furrowed her eyebrows dubiously while Sora noticed it observantly and laughed.

——Sora understood like the palm of his hand why she was found it so mysterious inside her mind.

Following the rules or not, it was certainly a cruel pattern for the【Tasks】.

After seventy-two hours have passed, what Sora will steal from Izuna will be a dice——her [Life].

Sora "killed one-tenth" of her life, yet even so, no matter how you look at it ——Izuna *helped* him.

Why could Izuna stay in such a good mood without watching him get killed?

Why did it become just like Sora suggested, even though they betrayed, they didn't kill each other——

"……Sora, Shiro. Izuna——haven't lost, desu……?"

Izuna declared in a "question form" ——as if she was asking to confirm something.

But, Sora and Shiro extended out all the remaining skewers and answered.

"We returned the favor of saving us, you know? Don't expect an admirable repayment like letting you win, okay♪"

"……Izuna-tan, too bad, but the ones…… who will win, the prize…… will be us……"

"It's incredible how you guys can say it like you're better than her when she's the one who saved us from dropping out not only from the game but, from life……"

Steph went past amazement and groaned, impressed, but.

"…………Yeah! Bring it on, desu!!"

——Maybe Izuna saw the answer she wanted in their faces.

Instantly, she stuffed all the skewers inside her mouth and gave a full smile.

"*chomp chomp* ……I'll pass you guys soon, desu! Prepare yourselves, desu."

Saying that with her stuffed cheeks, she hugged her tail and curled up.

Since Izuna implied she would sleep as she waited for seventy-two hours to pass, Sora and Shiro stood up again.

"Then, shall we hurry up? Does the cart look fine?"

"Eh, yes, somehow——wait, are we going to leave Izuna-san here and go on!? It's dangerous!?"

"Yeah…… It's really dangerous, isn't it——*for us."*

After Sora murmured that, Steph's face changed in one turn.

If they strained their ears——they could faintly hear it.

The presence of those guys(the monsters) who scattered with the arrival of the strong(Izuna), waiting for her to sleep.

And their target, of course, *wasn't* the sleeping tiger(Izuna). It made no sense for them to go after the predator.

The ones they must want to hunt, naturally, are the ones borrowing the tiger's authority——

"……Let's indulge in Izuna's kindness——let's get out of here while she's still awake."

——Yes, while a sleeper's breathing isn't raised, Izuna overpowers the surroundings, who gave a small smile.

Seeing her smile——Sora's voice could be heard trembling slightly.

The three of them jumped onto the cart without hesitation——and departed.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——The 59th square…… It's been seventy-eight hours since the start of the game.

The horse-drawn cart holding the three people was running along the edge of a grand cliff endlessly.

According to Shiro's map, the terrain(square) reflected the earth's surface beyond the edges of Elkia's northeastern border.

Everything——seemed to be this world(Disboard)'s greatest canyon known as [Star's Rift(Oblivion)].

The azure fissure extending into the sea and the two continents in the great war's final stages——was said to be an after-effect of the [Decisive Battle].

Traces of the power to mow down a star——Listening to the thunder roaring at the bottom of the ravine even now, Sora thought.

——It's been 21 squares since we parted from Izuna, the Forest of Spirit's outskirts seem far behind us already.

According to Steph's information, besides the Forest of Spirits, the monsters don't seem to inhabit anywhere else.

In other words, it seems we've escaped the danger zone a long time ago. It's *probably safe now.*

Seems to, appears to be, probably seems to——!!

"Don't believe it won't believe it!! Where are the pursuers! …… No~ne—— Trying to put me off guard!? Aaah!?"

"……Shiro, won't be, deceived…… Where? Where, are they…… hiding……!"

——Continuing to be vigilant, but with teary eyes like a new gamer playing a horror game.

Fearing immobile corpses endlessly, it was a template that didn't change itself at all.

The two kept fighting against an enemy that can't even be seen with a cellphone camera's zoom above the cart——

"……I know how you feel, but it's already a day and a half, you know? Even if you aren't alert for monsters……"

That's right, it's been thirty-six hours since they last noticed a monster.

They ran day and night since they'd be attacked on both sides when resting or when the horse and the cart-horse(Steph) reached their limit.

When that happened, both Sora and Shiro took turns staying awake and patrolling, but the monsters didn't appear.

Nevertheless, seeing the two still jumping at shadows, Steph just about had enough and was about to complain——

"——Shiro, what do you think? I feel it won't be that bad to think it's already safe but, how about you?"

"……Shiro, will…… believe, in Nii's, judgement……"

——Hmm. Then, the conclusion.

"——————We survived, Shiro"

Murmuring that, Sora and Shiro, the two embraced each other and fell into the cart.

With a huge amount of large tears dropping, they nodded as if confirming their lives.

……Ahhh, the sky is so blue.

Even that hateful sun only felt lovable right now as the two people narrowed their eyes.

"I allow it, everything——All living things, may you be blessed……"

"……Hallelujah…… Sleepy……"

"Wai, eeh, hey!? I'll be troubled if you just follow the flow and go into a deep sleep, alright!?"

Steph was bewildered by the extreme mood swing and proceeded to shout while steering the cart.

"After three squares we'll reach the 62nd square(destination), you know!? A different danger——a【Task】is drawing near!"

——*Danger?* 【*Task?*】——*Hmm,* Sora tilted his neck.

I see, so we've proceeded going after the outcome of the dice——until the [62nd] square.

If we stop at that square, a【*Task*】*that someone wrote will be activated, but*——

"……Compared to being chased by monsters, no matter what【Task】it may be, it'll be an easy game, right……"

Sora declared so with a serious face after pondering about it, with Shiro nodding in agreement.

Indirectly killing each other by stealing their [Life(dice)]——it was this game's greatest danger…… the【Tasks.】

But for Imanity(them), compared to starvation, overwork, and predation, it was probably a third or fourth danger……

"…………Even if it makes sense for me, it still doesn't change it's a danger, right!? Because——"

Immediately after, their vision blackened out as if to interrupt Steph's voice.

Maybe the cart crossed the edge of the 59th square because it was swallowed by a weird space filled with black mist.

——It was the first reason for Sora to call this game a shitty game——the [Square Movement(loading)].

It must be for the sake of forbidding illegal movement and withdrawing from the game through magic.

If they touched the "invisible wall" in games existing at the land(square)'s edge, they would be moved to the next land(square).

Not being able to turn back, all they could do was obey the outcome's value and continue onward.

As if that wasn't enough, they made this damn long reading(load) happen during the square movement.

It was a power that killed off Jibril's spatial shift, unilaterally coordinating the transfer.

Surely a highly sophisticated, ridiculous power(absurdity) must be at work for that, but——

"……Nii…… I finally, remembered…… this……"

"Ah~ what a coincidence, my little sister——This this loading's slowness and sound. There's no doubt"

Much less magic and spirits are outside the understanding for commoners(them) who can't perceive space.

However, the scratching noise couldn't be heard as anything but "the sound of a disk spinning".

If they silently starred at the undefined distorted view, an illusion of [NOW LOADING] with "juggling monkeys" could be seen at the edge of their view ——Sora and Shiro murmured quietly, remembering even the killing urge.

——[*This is Neo Geo*]. [17]

"……C-Can I continue…… the talk?"

To the two people were clicking their tongues and tapping unconsciously, Steph timidly——

"I-If the【Task】——if [*Die*] is written on it, we'll die……won't we?"

Her body trembled as she asked perhaps just noticing that danger in the rules.

"Oh? ……How unlike Steph…… aren't you wide awake?"

07: The Dice Holder who's stopped on the square will be forced to follow any instructions the【Task】holds

——Any kind of instruction is permitted.

Yes, even instructions designating to *throw away their lives or similar* can't be denied——but.

"This game has ma~ny mysteries, right? One of them is this【Task】rule."

Although irritated, seemingly giving up, Sora explained dispassionately.

"I said it, right. *We didn't agree to kill each other.* Even if you don't worry, a death task——no one will write it"

"J-Just why is that so, because——"

12: However, all【Tasks】that include any of the following will be considered invalid:

12a: Words limiting the【Task】to a specific target

"*Targets can't be specified.* Writing an unconditional instant death【Task】, what happens if you step on it?"

"————————Ah."

Smiling wrly at Steph, perhaps she felt embarrassed for being told with a smiling face, who lowered her face.

——*That wasn't all,* Sora continued in his mind.

Indeed, this game is [Sugoroku]——[one person can ascend] no matter what happens.

Not to mention, if no one ascends, then the only one who would be saved is the [Leading Player].

Thinking it with common sense——It's a good a thing there's only a few opponents to compete with.

Killing all the other players would be the promising and certain option.

——*Big miss,* Sora laughed.

Since killing means——we ***can't steal their dice.***

Much less when it's impossible to ascend without stealing dice——

"For example, if a【Task】indicates an instant death, [the task is accomplished] when they die, right. The Question Master loses one die, moreover, they can't collect the dead guy's remaining dice——a poor move going in the opposite direction from victory."

In the rules, this【Task】rule forces any kind of unreasonable possibilities upon others.

But in fact, "in order to win" ——the things one could write were restricted.

"Directions only you can do are invalid——If written【Tasks】*are somehow doable*, then the possibility(chances) to steal a die will also be a danger(risk) to have one stolen instead——If it's 'instructions stealing but not be stolen', then——"

——The [Square Movement(loading)] making even cup noodles become soggy ended,

"……【Tasks】like that will be the limit."

Sora gave a small laugh, pointing ahead to the empty field of vision.

At the 60th square's starting coordinate——At the continuously changing precipitous cliff's edge was a billboard.

Glancing at the sentence written there, Steph muttered quietly.

"……What is it, that"

…………

"Hey, we've moved through dozens of squares until now, you haven't noticed it even once?"

10: Each【Task】will be described on a billboard arranged irregularly on the square's board

"They were always around until now, weren't they!? Those billboards with【Tasks】written on them!!"

"Was there even a single free moment to worry about that tattered billboard until now!?"

………..*Hm, well, frankly speaking, there wasn't.*

It wasn't just Sora, even Shiro readily accepted Steph's rebuttal.

Even the two in question, with all the escaping and sleeping, could only read a few books.

In any case, this was what was written on the billboard Sora pointed to.

——[Count all the strands of hair on your body, including the tail, and answer the correct number of strands, desu.]

……*Izuna, even in writing, you have this way of talking, huh,* Sora said pleasingly.

"It's a【Task】anyone can do——but the ones who *can actually do it in seventy-two hours* are really limited."

——In the first place, the only ones who have a tail are Ino, Izuna, and Plum.

With the five senses of the Warbeasts(bunch of absurdities), they could probably immediately count their body hair.

But, for the ones without a tail, let alone those five senses——more specifically for them, they have no choice aside counting all the stands of hair from even that horse tied to the cart, including its tail, one by one.

Doing so for seventy-two hours——it would grow instead, there's no way they could do that.

……*That's quite a harsh*【*Task*】*you wrote, huh, Izuna-tan.*

"In any case, regardless of the【Task】, [stopping the target for seventy-two hours to steal one die] is the limit."

Would it be like Sora and Shiro's, stopping them for seventy-two hours with questions only answerable by a few.

Or would it be like this one, giving instructions only a restricted amount of people can do in seventy-two hours.

——As long as someone's trying "to win," it's a fact they can't write anything besides those two patterns.

"……The, tasks…… until now, too…… were mostly, like that……"

Shiro listed some of the tasks she had memorized.

——[Complete a hundred laps on this square, from one edge to the other, with your own feet, desu.]

This was also Izuna's【Task】——It meant go walk 2,000km within seventy-two hours.

Though, too severe even for a Werebeast…… to begin with, there’s no need for Izuna to complete her own tasks.

It’d be easy for Jibril, insanity with the risk of death for Ino, and the others are slowed down by seventy-two hours.

——[With more than two people, pledge immediately to the Oaths and, in accordance to it, be victorious in a game instructed by someone other than the targets of the task.]

This must be Jibril——Normally, it would be [invalid] without any coercive power at all.

So long as there isn’t a third person, the conditions can’t be met and becomes a “task impossible to do.”

But if *the conditions were met,* then it’d surely be a【Task】of the highest difficulty, but——In any case.

“Well, one more mysterious thing.【Tasks】only the Question Master can do are forbidden——*Why?”*

“……Hah? Isn’t it because the game can’t be established otherwise……?”

I see, a common answer, Sora laughed.

In the quiz programs, if participants were to design only questions they could answer, what would happen?

Surely, that shitty program would immediately cut and the one in charge would be fired.

But Sora, with a nice smiling face towards Steph who spoke of such common sense——responded irrationally.

“So? *Why* is there a need to establish the game?”

“…………Wha~at……?”

“This game, if the Old Deus is the [host] aiming for [us to kill each other], a binding(rule) like this would be in the way, right? Letting us force unreasonable demands, or even impossible tasks and instant deaths is better, right?”

Then, what’s the reason for not doing so?

——At that moment.

Sora and Shiro, on both their chests——like growing from the void, the dice increased by one.

From Izuna who stepped into Sora’s task, one die moved to Sora after seventy-two hours have passed.

Likewise, someone who had stepped into Shiro’s task must’ve lost one die after the time limit.

Obeying the number of dice increasing to nine, their limbs extended slightly.

While Sora (provisionally 16.2 years old) and Shiro (provisionally 9.9 years old) gloated together——he declared.

“I can even affirm it. 【Tasks】 which only you can do are invalid——The one who said that *was me*♪”

“……………………Whaaaaat~?”

Sora said with not a single trace of guilt——exactly why his smiling face was a devil itself.

This【Task】rule, although restricted to Sora and Shiro alone, was too much of an advantage.

Just like Izuna said——only [ ](those two) moving together can make tasks impossible for anyone but [ ](those two).

……*W-Well.*

When you consider this journey(survival), it’s still a tepid “handicap,” but let’s put that aside.

“N~ow, let’s ima~~gine, commoners!!”

Sora stood up exaggeratedly above the cart.

“Our memories before the start of the game are erased! Let’s imagine, after confirming the rules, we seem to cry out, ‘You’re fucking kidding me, that’s like Jibril writing “use spatial shift” kind of impossible game, right!?’”

After Sora shouted that loudly, everyone gathered——and thought about it.

——*I wonder why,* even Sora thought that.

“Following that, ‘Tasks only you can do are forbidden, banned an~nd prohibited’——Can you imagine it!?”

——That should have been the erased memories.

But…… they could easily imagine it as if they had just seen it.

Shiro nodded deeply as if saying that’s how her brother was while Steph’s eyes were wide opened.

“Thus, I changed it to an advantageous rule only for me and Shiro——but”

Sora was in a good mood, but——boldly continued.

“Let’s recall again, shall we? This game started *after everyone consented.* There——”

It had a condition everyone was unlikely to agree with. Therefore, clearly there were fake rules among them——

“No matter how you think about it, there are rules prepared by me…… Absolutely interesting, right?”

If this game *wasn’t about* making them kill each other with the Old Deus as the host——then.

“This game, on whose circumstances, who began it, on what intentions—— Who do you think holds the initiative?”

Saying that, Sora played with the dice in his hands and laughed, but.

Steph, dissatisfied, muttered quietly.

"……But, if you'll die once the dice reaches zero, then…… isn't it the same thing?"

If the dice keeps being stolen, eventually that "death(zero)" will be forced on someone.

In the end, isn't it the same as killing each other by ordering death—— Steph's eyes appealed so.

"Certainly, *you'll die if you lose.* On the contrary, you'll die from starvation, or get eaten by reliable monsters(gentlemen), conversely, if you eat carelessly, you'll die from poisoning(attempting) without exception, an instant☆Go to Heaven, right?"

"……Nii…… for, us…… it'll probably…… be hell, instead……"

Sora replied in an easygoing manner to the bitter end, Steph's face turned into a frown——

"But even so, it won't become a killing spree."

Turning, Sora announced with a tight face, Steph faltered with a "Why?" while staring at him.

Indeed, there's a coercive force working on the rules surpassing our own wills.

It would be the same as if we had consented into betting [our everything] and putting it on the plate.

*We may easily die, even if you put aside the tasks and the dice as something irrelevant——**But, even so.***

"——*After all, Shiro and I will win* anyway♪"

……

…………

"……………………Fufu…… yes, that's right!"

——*Winning absolutely naturally, in our scenario——**there's no such plot.***

A rather refreshing arrogance bursting into laughter, before long the anxiety disappeared on Steph's face.

The natural swindler that was Sora and Shiro who unconditionally believed him——But just one thing.

For this reason, Steph also had faith in them and felt proud of it.

That, for sure, was the reason why Steph entrusted her dice to Sora before the game started.

——[　　](Kuuhaku) does not know of the word defeat.

And because winning means [perfect victory] ——therefore, they won't recognize anything less.

Someone's death or sacrifice as a condition——they won't permit a "victory inferior to defeat" and so forth.

"……It's the 61st square soon, just one before our destination. Let's carefully look for the billboard."

——Sora turned his face away from the embarrassing gaze, pointing ahead of the cart that kept running.

Pretending to not notice the tepid mocking gazes from Shiro and Steph,

"In that case——I'll show you how I instantly find out who wrote out the【Task】ahead."

Saying with a posed look, at the same time.

The continuously running cart was, once again, enveloped by the thick fog.

From the 60th to the 61st square——Ignoring the grating noise, they waited for their view to clear up.

Thus, after the long transition(load) ended, as expected, at the square's boundary before the transfer point——

As expected a sentence——a【Task】was engraved on an old billboard, standing as if discarded.

Yes, such a sentence was written, the billboard…………,

——[Pluck out your pe〇is while smiling and die refreshed] ……

————————.

……*swagger swagger*…… *roll roll* ……

On the precipitous cliff's greenery, under the clear skies, only the horse's hooves and cart wheels resounded.

"Sora~It seems I'm a little tired~♪ I just saw a word denying everything we just talked about❤"

Behind Steph who asked with a bright smiling face singing as if rejecting reality.

In a poised state with a face wearing a tepid gaze——was Sora and Shiro whose time was stopped.

——*Well, well, well.*

Wellwellwell, c-c-calm d-d-down.

Calm down, Sora, virgin, nearly 18 years old, provisionally, 16.2 years old!

Eh~, for now there's something that must be done first, right? Right…… just like the billboard declared——

“*Geezeer*!! I hope you’re listening this is definitely your’s right! What the hell are you writing did you finally go senile! Rather even if you don’t open your mouth isn’t there something besides dirty jokes you doggg!?”

Guessing the offender right instantly, Sora’s roar resounded to the heavens.

——A reply came from behind the giant game board forming a spiral.

The offender’s reply resounded on the game board in a straight line from a nearby distance.

[Oooh what good news! To think Sora-dono would stop at my【Task】and ——what!?]

They couldn’t see his figure. However, perhaps the Werebeast’s eyes captured them.

[What……To think Shiro-dono and Stephanie-dono are also going together……I’m sure it must be painful sight to see a gentleman drawing something out with a smile as he dies invigorated……But!! Not only for the sake of pest control(Sora-dono), but for the sake of world peace!! Please somehow understand this isn’t a way to sacrifice——]

“We didn’t stop at it~ We’re passing by! Bastard, what did you plan to do if you stepped on this square, huh!?”

[I was prepared for the worst? But for you to be passing by——*tsk*, damn stubborn cockroach……]

……*swagger swagger*…… *roll roll*……

The cart continued advancing as Steph rode with a hollow smile while time was stopped for him and Shiro.

Sora, the only one who could still think, enduring a headache, groaned as if wringing it out.

“……Geezer. If I died to this, you understand you would lose, right……?”

He just said instant death【Tasks】are the worst moves, the farthest from victory.

But the returned reply was——plain and simple.

[I wonder? If the [Traitor(Sora-dono)] who screwed us and killed Miko-sama were to drop dead, it’s obvious this game would work out somehow——I’ll fulfill my duty as a retainer(revenge) and crush the world's enemy(you bastard)……how is that a loss?]

…………

“……Sora. Sora~. Of course, this is also within your expectations…… isn’t it? Right?”

Sora replied to the imploring-like voice, but in his mind——It’s clearly unexpected.

Ordering death meaninglessly, the justifiability of betrayal, etcetera……

But all of that was——“the case only if everyone considered it upfront.”

Either he was a real idiot or Miko’s death greatly shocked him——No, it was probably both.

At any rate, what he really wanted to snap at was the fact his brain’s fuse seems to have completely flown away.

Despite having the five senses to see through lies, even Steph could see through Sora’s [traitor declaration(big lie)]——

He still accepted his words of all things as the truth——!

“……I, I see, that’s quite the admirable resolution you have there, I’m no match for it”

But——*There’s no problem.*

Regaining composure, Sora secretly wiped his perspiration and spoke for revenge as well as self-interest.

“To go as far as risking your ‘grandchild(Izuna)’s death’……must be the extremity of loyal retainers.”

[…………What?]

In a suspicious voice, he had used his remaining scant reasoning to come up with——“tasks where only males die.”

Targets cannot be specified——but while he wants to kill Sora, he won’t let Izuna die.

Thus he wrote a death(task) utilizing “something only males have”——or so he intended.

——*Good grief, it’s too much.* [18]

“If a female——and I mean Izuna, were to step onto this【Task】, they’d have to extract something suitable from an animal as they smile and die invigorated……It’s a harsher idea than me dying by doing so, I’m amazed……”

……The writing for this task cannot be restricted to a target.

Just like how Izuna’s task must have [including the tail].

——If it doesn’t exist on oneself——it’ll simply bring in something else.

…………

——In the long silence, an idiot interrupted, crossing the interval within.

The scream ripped through the sound of the still running horse-drawn cart without caring about anyone——

[S-Sora-dono what should I do!? Izuna carries no sin please show mercy on Izuna! Make use of the normally meaningless unscrupulous fiend's wisdom! Please a plan to save Izuna——!!!]

The pathetic petition tembling with tears uselessly resounded as an echo in the sky corridor.

"……I guess it's fine. Spit out what other stupid【Tasks】 you wrote without exception."

[Yes~~and also~~~blahblablahbah]

——And so.

Done listening to Ino's confession thoroughly, Sora nodded seriously.

"——Yeah, I see, I understand now. Relax, I found a countermeasure so Izuna doesn't die."

[Oh, ooooh……!! There was meaning in the error that was Sora-dono's birth! Ooh, I'm really grateful!!]

With the same understanding——Shiro took out a sack from a bag and wore it on her head, they nodded——

"But I won't tell you, bastard——!!!! Shit yourself and sleep!!!!"

"……Geezer……go count, your sins……aside from, being born……"

Just like Gedo and Fukumen(Rider)[19]——The two people thrust their middle fingers out as they replied.

————.

A BGM of an abusive language with unclear meaning was above the advancing cart.

"Wai, you two!? Y-You won't teach him the countermeasure!? If someone were to step on it——"

"……Plucking ……*Nii's, nii*…… Geezer, ten thousands of deaths, won't be enough……"

Steph's mouth closed at Shiro's slur holding about four-tenths of real killing intent——but, as for Sora.

He laughed after drawing out all the【Tasks】from one player and, in Imanity, carved such words on the cart.

——[It was a lie to make him reveal his tasks. No one would die with his tasks]

Ino’s【Tasks】were all——subjective, objective, and directive.

All phrases were incredibly lacking indications about target and period—— There wasn’t any coercive power to it.

It’s the same as contracts that don’t specify things like who will, by whom, what, when, and how.

It’s fine to wait seventy-two hours, you can accomplish it if you’re a male by dying, only Ino’s dice will be plucked.

The guy who did something so stupid is the Eastern Union’s high official? ……He should be dismissed.

[T-Then, let’s make a deal! I’ll introduce you to a few cute girls!!]

While the proposal resounded——Sora breathed deeply and ridiculingly disregarded it.

“…………Nii, ni-ni-nii, wha, wha, what’s, wrong……”

“Sora, a-are you alright!? Did you hit your head when you fell from the cart!?”

Shiro and Steph, with a face like they saw a ghost, gasped as their voices trembled.

But Sora, with a gentle smile, shook his head elegantly and replied.

“Both of you calm down…… Men are beings that grow up every day, you know?”

That’s right, until a little while ago, I’d have bit into the bait in zero frames.

But now the Eastern Union has merged! There’s as many kemonomimis as lights in the skies to take advantage of!

Sora, 18 years old, still a long way——But! He’s no longer a man hooked by cheap baits!

[There’s a fan club infatuated with Elkia’s King(Sora-dono) who call themselves “I want to be embraced by Sora-sama” Association that’s puzzling the Eastern Union with some incomprehensible testimonies about——]

“Oooh friend, don’t be so cold!! We’re comrades who pledged eternal friendship just now, aren’t we!!!”

——But if the bait is expensive then it’s a different story.

Biting into the bait in zero frames, Sora exalted while thrusting his palm passionately and winding the air.

All the while, he received Steph and Shiro’s amazed——no, relieved, gazes upon himself.

“If it’s my unworthy silly wisdom, then I will share it as much as you want and as such, come on, hurry up and let me hear in details about it please, oh my soul mate——!!”

But, Sora’s voice continued without caring while he shouted overly pretending to be some kind of actor——

…………*silence*

His answer was only a calm silence——no.

There was only the sound of the disk spinning and the darkness, which already became something usual after being repeated 61 times in a row.

The running cart had crossed the 61st square and, before they noticed it, they reached the edge of the square.

“~~~Now, it’s ‘Event Load’!? It’s aiming too much for the KOTY[20] right!!!”

Sora was breathing coarsely through his nose while growling at the [Square Movement(Loading)] that ignored the mood and Steph questioned him.

“……More importantly. You haven’t forgotten the next square will be the one with the【Task】, have you?”

“You, don’t make me repeat! I just said that something like that hardly matters, didn’t I!?”

“But, I also just happened to see your prediction getting wrong and having a task written ‘die’, didn’t I!?”

——Sora stopped laughing and ridiculed it as “something trivial.”

Just having one person in charge of being a fool was already good enough, but, they even found out his entire【Task(Fool)】was completely harmless.

No matter what kind of task it may be, it’ll just slow them down by seventy-two hours——In other words.

There’s too much time for him to inquire with more details about the interesting organization known as the “I want to be embraced by Sora-sama” Association——!

And like that, the cart that had Sora, who was in high spirits, and the other two riding, finally reached the square of the outcome of their dice.

——The load——correction, the movement to the [62nd square(destination)] finished——and, in their view was——

…………

……………………Erm, yeah.

“Aha, ahaha~ hey, Gramps? About the details about the girls that want to be embraced by me——”

“……Nii…… Nii……! Look at…… reality——!”

——*Reality. What about it,* Sora laughed with a troubled face.

Occasionally, Shiro, who was his prided little sister and a genius girl, would say weird things too far from the understanding of commoners.

It was her brother's duty to strive to understand it, but——He would often be troubled by it…… *well then.*

——He was riding the cart. Or so he was supposed to. And yet.

He had been thrown out, abruptly, without any context, and, on his own, far up into the sky.

He was literally in the middle of a bungee jump without any rope and was currently falling towards boiling magma.

Could this realistic situation, that's lacking the letter [re], really be called [reality]?

…………Hahahaha, no wayyyyyyyyyyy——

His thoughts ran idle but the【Task】being read mercilessly hit Sora's earlobes.

——【The task's target should instantly be teleported into midair, fall into the magma below, and burn.】

"Ah, I see♪ Sora, Sora~? As expected, I'm not an idiot~"

The voice continued, right by his side.

"It seems like you can just make it so that *they will die if they can't accomplish it*——just like this❤"

Hearing Steph's words, laughing while taking a walk in the middle of the air alongside him with eyes reflecting no light, Sora smiled.

"Hahaha, you really are an idiot, huh. That way there's no change to the fact it will become impossible to collect all dice but one, right. By the way Shiro, listen to your brother's great deduction…… **won't we die with this!?**"

"……Welcome back, Nii…… but, soon…… it'll be, bye bye……"

——It's said when people are right before their deaths, they'll see a revolving lantern.

They would search through each and every memories and knowledge, looking for a way to escape the predicament.

It was said to be a phenomenon which caused an aberrant activity——making the brain overcome its limits.

That, it even stopped time.

An enormous amount of memories crossed Sora's accelerated brain.

The kemonomimi girls hugging Sora saying with a shrill voice they want to be embraced by him.

The geezer——making a muscular pose while making the muscles of his chest move and twitch.

His own smiling face telling the kemonomimi girls fighting over him “you girls, please get along.”

The geezer——enthusiastically showing his muscles while prostrating with his fresh uniform with an afterglow.

The geezer——making the kemonomimi girls curl near his loins while he puffed a cigarette…… *fuu*.

The vermillion-colored cloth waving.

The loincloth swaying with the wind…… red——geezer——

(Are you stupiddddddddddd as if I’ll allow myself to die with such a revolving lantern, you shitty geezerrrrrrr!)

Using those forged memories that I now want to erase, just what the hell did this head of mine planned to save me from?! He was completely confused at the turbulent waves of flashbacks, but.

“……Nii……”

A single drop——just like a drop of water.

It was a faint voice and the hand holding his wasn’t trembling——The eyes looking at him also didn’t think they would die.

——The older brother won’t allow that to happen.

Her eyes were certain of that and with the words that followed.

“……Calm, down……?”

While time was still stopped, his rippling thoughts became calm.

He roared once at his instincts that raised a scream at the heat of magma burning his skin.

——*Disappear, you’re in the way,* Sora ordered.

He got an answer from the warmth of the hands and the light of eyes that looked at him.

In order to instantly uncover the [meaning] of this magma——this unnaturally slow death——

Fear is(You are) a hindrance——!!

Sora clenched his teeth hard enough to break them——and, sure enough, he reached the answer in an instant.

——Originally, he would’ve found the one who wrote this【Task】through process of elimination.

And from there, he would list and test the methods for breaking through and uncover the moves he could make——But, there weren’t even a few seconds left until the magma and, if someone could do that in that small amount of time, it would be Shiro not Sora.

As such, Sora undid the string in his own way——In other words, he shouted towards the boiling and bubbling magma which was approaching…… towards the “malice” floating and could be seen there——

“——That’s quite the nerve you got there, huh, *you bastard!!* I’ll remember it, alright!?”

It was the young boy who once induced them without telling a single lie, used them and, in the end, planned to turn them into food.

The Dhampir——who simply harbored pure harmful intent, deeply etched into his pale face’s smile.

——Having *decided on his own it was Plum’s* thin smile, he postponed proving his intuition and——

“Give me your panties.”

“————Huh?”

“The panties, I’m talking about your panties!! Panties, shorts, scanties!! Your panties——It’s a panty made of linen with 0.8mm of thickness of a natural light pink dye with a red frill ribbon attached to it, right, isn’t that so!?”

While baring his canines, he asked——no, he simply confirmed it.

——The view was etched deeply into his heart since he did a continuous loop to [remember] it——confirmed everything.

That instant, where Shiro had lowered down Steph’s panties.

The way it stretched, the shape of the wrinkles, the sewing and even the string used to sew it——without a doubt, he remembered it all!!

“You keep up with the sexual harassment even on your death bead…… it’s wonderful how you keep being yourself until the very end——”

“……Nii…… even though, you’re a DT[21]…… why, do you have, such…… knowledge, for identification——”

Amid the sensation of boiling magma burning their skin, with resignation and consternation flying about——he answered inside his heart, *it’s **because** I am a DT.*

“Enough——Just shut up and give me those *easily burnable* panties already——!!”

Sora roared with a face befitting of a crisis but before Steph could even reach, much faster than her——

“Hyaaaaaaah!?”

Shiro noticed Sora’s intention and inserted her hands inside Steph’s skirt, plucking out her panties.

The remaining force made Steph spin around——but, he couldn't afford to mind it.

Shiro took out some food from the pouch and wrapped Steph's panties around it——then, she threw it down at the magma right before their eyes with all her strength.

——It seemed so slow, it was abnormal and it was clearly visible inside their view.

After the reason finally caught up to the intuition, Sora lined up the basis for having "decided that by himself."

——Why did it have to be Steph's panties?

——That's because it would be bad if it wasn't something that "burned" faster than they were falling.

This【Task】made the target of the task get teleported to midair, and inevitably, fall——but.

But, that sentence didn't restrict "what had to fall into the magma and burn" ——!

At the same time the panties touched the magma——no, *before* it even touched it.

The fibers made of thin linen got engulfed by the heat raised from the magma's surface, which easily surpasses a thousand degrees Celsius.

pow——and in the instant that a small fire lighted on the panties (packing a meat) ——

——【The task has been accomplished.】

The magma disappeared along with the echoing of that voice, and, in its place, the watery surface of a lake appeared, where the three of them fell.

While he was sinking in the water, Sora laughed ferociously at the last basis ——Plum's intention.

——The degree of freedom for this【Task】rule, contrary to the words, was incredibly low.

Designations only one can complete are invalid, so what will happen if one were to write it in a way one would only steal while not having any stolen?

As long as one's trying to win, they cannot write anything besides those stopping others for seventy-two hours.

But——what if "you're not trying to win."

They would give【Tasks】which, when noticed, anyone can *instantly* accomplish——so, there's only two possible intents behind it.

So, did he fool around like always and ended up messing up, or would it be ——

(I won't wait for seventy-two hours, *so please just hurry up and steal my dice*…… or something like that?)

Right——while making face like it was saying [Or else you'll die~] while adding a heart mark to it.

That Plum surely must've written those tasks while making that annoyingly thin smile on his pale face, Sora smiled bitterly.

——*Just him. Just for Plum alone,* ***having the dice stolen from him was more convenient——***

"——Puhaa! Haa…… haa…… are…… are we saved!?"

Hitting the water, Steph asked while peeking from above the water's surface.

But, Sora grinned at the voice he could only hear faintly and answered inside his mind.

——[NO.]

ababababbababababegobobobobabagah——!!

The bubbles surging violently on the water's surface were saying things beyond translation.

"D-Don't bother with me! Please, at least save my little sister, Shiro!!"

"……Shiro…… until the very end, wants…… to die, together…… with Nii……"

Those two were the strongest when it's about games and the weakest when it's about anything else.

Their lives were thinner than Japanese paper, as if they were the embodiment of [fragility].

But, they were steadily sinking towards the bottom of the lake, as if they were, literally, heavier than a hammer……

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

"——Shiro, I promise…… I won't run away from reality anymore. That's why……"

"……*nods*…… yeah…… Nii, Shiro, too…… won't, ever, run away again……"

The two had sunk, but, barely got salvaged thanks to Steph's desperate salvaging operation.

Hugging each other and filling their drenched faces with tears, they firmly pledged to stand against reality together.

——*Let’s learn to swim.*

“Now, Sora! What kind of repetitive talk you’ll distort saying I got it wrong!?”

While being completely drenched, her breathing disturbed by weariness and exhaustion, Steph suddenly stood up and shouted.

She pulled up not only the drowning Sora and Shiro, but, even the sunken luggage at the bottom of the lake——

Her amazing lung capacity and inexhaustible stamina that still let her shout raised even a sense of respect for her.

——But, if respect recovered stamina, then, they wouldn’t be having such a hard time.

“……No, it’s fine like this…… it’s just like I expected——”

“Are you really saying that you expected yourself to spit out water from your mouth like a fountain while trembling together with your litter sister, raising a crying voice!? Was it also within your expectations to turn into an artificial fishing reef decorating the bottom of the lake!? You really think about nature, right~!?”

…… Maybe she really snapped this time, her criticism is many times sharper than usual. But. Sora grinned——and, while lying on his back and spitting out more water, he laughed.

“Why would you create a fishing reef in a freshwater lake…… if it’s about protecting nature then you should create it in the ocean——”

“It’s-not-about-thaaaaaat!! How is there anything ‘expected’ about this disastrous situation!!”

Steph firmly pointed that out so Sora thought about her so-called “disastrous situation.”

——He was lying on his back, Shiro was lying on top of him and Steph was screaming.

The rucksack had sunk in the lake as they had before——but that, too, got pulled up by Steph.

Most of the contents should be safe.

It was a waxed water-proof bag(rucksack) since he assumed from the very start “this kind of thing” would happen.

Their smartphones, tablets, and the like, too, were all water-proofed products that could be used inside the bath.

And, since they accomplished the 【Task】——the dice floating around the three’s chests increased one by one.

——*That’s all of the current situation called “disastrous.” I wonder,* ***what’s***

wrong about it——

"*They are killing each other,* aren't they…… just which mouth was saying that it's within expectations……!"

Steph said so with a regretful voice, as if blaming him, although Sora noticed it a little late.

Sora said they wouldn't end up killing each other——and yet.

She called it "disastrous" ——"this" situation where both Ino and Plum had nearly killed them.

"……. Hmm, even if you ask me 'which mouth,' unfortunately, I only have one mouth, so……"

Sora murmured so and stood up and turned to Steph, who was glaring at him accusingly.

He said it as carefree as always——but.

"Regardless if I spit out water or fish from this mouth, I'll say it as many times as necessary——*it's all within my expectations."*

"………………!"

He declared with a gaze that didn't waver in the slightest.

Steph faltered involuntarily but Sora continued, completely aloof, while squeezing his wet shirt.

"This game started after everyone consented…… with improbable conditions."

——That's right, with improbable premises.

They'd believe in each other, they wouldn't betray each other, they'd kill each other, and the price was Miko's death.

There were many improbably conditions to be accepted——and there's one more thing at that.

"'A game with an Old Deus'…… me and Shiro would participate unconditionally. Jibril would participate——either due to obeying us or by curiosity, I guess. If it involves Miko-san, then Ino and Izuna would also participate. Steph, well~ I guess maybe you would participate by going with the flow."

Sora once again wore the shirt he had wringed and, while showing a thin smile——he spoke.

"——And? Why would Plum be participating in this game?"

……Those words made Steph choke.

It was a game with improbable conditions——but started with the consent towards the ones that were, probably.

But then, what about Plum who from the very start didn’t have any reason, motivation, or obligation to participate?

“In this game, a Dhampir(Plum)’s survival is more endangered than Imanity(our)’s. Every place in this field are open plains, after all. It’s a long-term battle where the sun is fatal. Forget about bloodsucking, there’s no way to even replenish the bodily fluids.”

Since it was almost *impossible to ascend,* there wasn’t even any significance for Plum to participate.

“What did he aim for and under what conditions did he consent to participating? ——It’s simple, right Shiro?”

Every one of them, at the very least, wringed out and dried their clothes——Sora had pointed to the dice that had increased by one——due to accomplishing the【Task】prepared by Plum which anyone could do.

Seeming to have finally caught on to her older brother’s thoughts, Shiro answered happily.

“……Plum’s…… aim, is to…… ‘win without ascending’……”

Saying that, the two of them played around with the dice they stole——No, that Plum made them steal.

Imanity’s strongest gamer, [ ](Kuuhaku), showed a thin smile, fearlessly, irreverently——and declared.

——*If you forgot, then, we’ll say it as many times as it’s necessary.*

——[ ](Kuuhaku) does not know of defeat.

Just like this declaration, everything was within expectations.

Everything lined up correctly towards victory, just like the inevitable——

“…………That’s right. Fufu, that’s how it is, right! Then——”

There was no longer anxiety spilling from Steph’s face.

Her face broke into a relieved smile as if she had remembered something she was about to forget.

She took a deep breath and then pointed at Sora and Shiro——No, to behind them, in other words, “beyond them.”

“……Would you please let me hear about the scenario Elkia’s prided two Wise Kings expected? About *what will happen from now on……* and along with it, what I should do about my underwear so I don’t end up with my heart breaking ❤”

——Steph pointed out with an empty smile, her eyes still dead.

The scenery got temporarily overwritten due to the task and, on top of that, everyone got teleported high in the sky.

Maybe it ran away, since both the horse and the cart they were riding in earlier had disappeared without a trace.

They have no other choice besides to walk on foot, through the pathless fields still extending far into the horizon.

While they were making a posed look…… the single teardrop running down on the yet silent and immobile Sora and Shiro's cheek silently spoke it all.

It's like a lie.

It's the first move and yet, something like this happened.

The [62nd square] ——this place, where they were standing on after going through hardships and dying experiences.

The place they were aiming for was after more [289 squares], after throwing the dice many more times and piling up many more hardships.

——This place was about one sixth of the total…… he cursed at the him who agreed to the rules.

Couldn't he do something more about it!? At least about the means for moving, you know——!?

"~~~A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step!! Come on, gather the dice at me one more time and let's [travel together]!!"

Sora roared as to inspire his heart which seemed it would easily break down if he were to lose focus.

And just like the first time——they [traveled together].

Leaving [one die] with Steph and Shiro, all the remaining dice were gathered at Sora.

04: In the case of [traveling together], after declaring so, the travelers will only move in accordance to the outcome of the representative(one person).

05. In the case of the number of players moving together surpasses two people, an [Overall Number of Travel Companions × Attendants]'s worth of dice will be removed from the number of dice used.

When [traveling together] as three people, six dice will be lost per move, but ——it can't be helped.

The number of dice thrown will be greater that way, the outcome would also be bigger, and the number of squares with a 【Task】 they will have to stop at decreases.

Steph grabbed eight of the dice floating around her chest and handed them over to Sora's extended hand——Or so she was about to, but, she halted.

Noticing something, she lowered her face and asked.

"……It might be a little too late for this, but…… why are you bringing me along?”

————————Wh…… at?

“M-My bad…… to be honest, I looked down on you…… are you saying that, on your first look of the game, you wanted to [play it by traveling alone while being the weakest character and without raising any levels] ——!? Damn you! You must be a pro masochist, right!?”

“……Nii, that’s, just…… because, it’s a series tagged with uploader missing……”[22]

“I-I don’t understand what you’re saying!? I-It’s not that……”

In the first move, Steph was borderline intimidated and was forced to [travel together], but, her face distorted in doubt and said.

“This [travel together] rule…… it would be *far more effective if you left me behind,* wouldn’t it……”

——*So* ***why did you force me into traveling together with you?***

Maybe she finally noticed it, since she spilled that fearfully while feeling something was wrong.

Sora and Shiro turned and looked at each other.

…… *It really was too late for that,* they exchanged smiles, amazed.

At first, they intimidated Steph, stole and used the [nine dice] ——but.

If they brought Steph along and [traveled together], each one would lose two dice per move——a total of [six] dice would be consumed.

Furthermore, if they failed on accomplishing a【Task】, it would decrease by one for each person——at worst, they could even end up *consuming it all in a single move.*

Even if the value of the outcome increases along with the number of dice, if the consumption also increases then the result would be negative.

Let alone that——

“……If it was only Sora and Shiro then——you could get away with just having [two] dice consumed, couldn’t you?”

That’s right——Going by the rules, the consumption would increase if the number of people moving together *“surpasses two.”*

Surpassing two people——it’s “exceeding.”

It’s not “two or more” ——so *two people aren’t included in that.*

If it’s Sora and Shiro [with just the both of them], they could get away with having only one die consumed for each of them, totaling only two.

But, if they add one more person to that——from that moment on, the consumption would triple.

“Basically, me and Shiro have no other choice besides [traveling together], but, with this rule, there’s little meaning for anyone else besides us to use it. In addition, just me and Shiro is fine, but, it would be disadvantageous for us if we were to add one more companion. Our chances to win would be come thinner, so we should leave you behind and go on——is that what you’re trying to say?”

“Y-Yes……”

Steph said troubled, but, the voice that answered was——

From the one who was in possession of [27 dice], having received nine from Shiro and eight from Steph.

“——Then, too bad, but, you’re [wrong]…… isn’t it regrettable?”

It was a low and sharp voice laughing fearlessly——in the late 40s.

“This [traveling together] rule, too——The one who attached it was *undoubtedly me.* Then——”

——This [traveling together] rule was completely meaningless for everyone besides Sora and Shiro.

There’s a [traitor] weaved in, so even if two people moved together, there weren’t any advantages to it.

If they moved together with three or more people, it would simply be disadvantageous…… it was a rule meaningless for anyone to use.

But——Since that rule was essential for Sora and Shiro, Sora must’ve attached it.

——*If you say it’s something convenient like “like there won’t be any penalty if it’s just Sora and Shiro(two at most),” then basically, it means that there are “those kinds of circumstances,” right* ***God?***——

“Rather, I see it as *you can’t win if you don’t travel together*——please [declare] it.”

He anticipated it——at the end of this giant game board, far beyond the horizon.

The words Sora spoke while laughing, as if mocking and inciting the Old Deus that awaited there.

He would bring down a god with only a human body——he said so with his future(aged) voice and face as if he *had already* shown it many times.

Both Shiro and Steph’s faces involuntarily turned red.

While still being prompted by Sora, they took his hands——and declared.

——They’re [traveling together] ——

As the words echoed, Sora grabbed the [Life(dice)] from his chest and threw them in the empty space.

From the moment they all rolled on the ground and revealed their numbers

——they could only proceed until that value.

The lives of those three——At the price of two-tenths of their lives.

The place they would reach after proceeding while consuming their life, their existence time, their age——just where would it be?

Sora and Shiro laughed.

Steph trembled.

Then, they looked at the destination that their lives(dice) revealed——……

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——Thirty minutes have passed ever since they stared at it.

"I also asked the same thing during the first move, but…… what are you doing?"

"I think I also answered the same thing during the first move, but!!——It's a 'ritual'!!"

"…… 'Random number analysis'……"

——The nervousness and the like had already became a distant memory.

Steph (1.8 years old) asked while sitting in a triangle while Sora and Shiro answered instantly——in other words.

It was a situation where a nearly 50-year-old NEET virgin hikikomori gamer was doing a handstand with his upper half naked while taking along two little girls.

If the police passed by, then in one shot, with just the circumstantial evidence and the boiling smell of an offense, he would be arrested and certainly charged for it.

It was a bizarre situation that would surely charge him as guilt.

"……Nii, next…… keep moving the torch, to the left and right, while making squats…… then throw it."

"No, erm…… can I ask you to explain it in more detail?"

——His figure had looked like that of a reliable and stern father for a moment, but, when one looked attentively like this, it was just an older brother(Sora) with a sorry odor drifting around.

"The invalidation of tasks that can only be done by yourself and this travel together rule. I told you that I was the one who made both of them, but——"

02: The Dice Holder can only move across the same amount of squares as the outcome of throwing all the dice they possess.

03: The result from throwing the dice is random and, after throwing it, [one] die from the used ones is removed.

“These dice rules were probably also designed by me.”

“……Nii, next…… return, one step…… and throw it…… while making, a bridge.”

He made a bridge, looking pained, just like Shiro instructed and once again threw one dice.

——All of them were showing [six].

“Anyone can do a hand movement(technique) of this level…… to *manipulate the outcome,* right!”

……*Like hell they can.*

Shiro seemed to have heard the voice in Steph’s heart, but, actually *it really was something anyone could do.*

Like those with paranormal five senses, Izuna and Ino, and those with magic, like Jibril and Plum.

It was unclear as to who was the first one to say that it was forbidden, but——the older brother continued.

“But, if the manipulation of the outcome was forbidden, and you were to leave something as ambiguous as [Random-san] up to that Old Deus, the outcome would be manipulated in a way that no one would be able to ascend. It would be a cheat impossible to prove and we’d surely lose. As if I’d overlook it.”

“……Nii, next…… make a dent, on the, ground…… and throw……”

Just like she instructed, Sora stuffed his face to the ground and threw another dice.

“On top of that, even if you say [random], there’s someone *who can concretely specify* that [Random-san].”

He said while turning his gaze to Shiro.

“——*Here,* without fail.”

He said while staring at the surface of the dice, where the floating numbers were shown before rapidly disappearing.

Shiro replied with a smug face while raising her fingers and making a V.

If the manipulation of the outcome was forbidden so that “even the Old Deus wouldn’t be able to do it,” then.

Then, we have no choice but to specify the random function——through a specific pseudo random number sequence.

If the erasure of memories is the initial condition, then it’s a fact they’ve made a random no one can operate on.

“However! If Shiro could specify it, then——certainly it was specified under ‘some certain conditions’!!”

“……If you, calculate…… the ‘reference value’…… you can adjust the random value…… and specify it, to get the number you want……”

And so, this is the basis for saying it was something we prepared, the older brother laughed wickedly.

“Proceed by throwing all the dice you possess——but there’s no rule saying to *throw all of it at the same time,* is there?”

Then——by altering the conditions and throwing it one at a time, you can calculate the reference value.

“I already knew it, but…… as charlatans, you both are so reliable that it’s even tiring.”

“……Then, Nii…… Next, undress your bottoms, too…… take a step back……”

“——Shiro, I think it’s about time for me to question it, but, is there really a possibility the lack or possession of clothes are part of the reference value?”

Sora let that out with his eyes half closed, Shiro answered in her head—— *There’s no way that’s true.*

The [random] Shiro specified had the same deviation characteristics of Ro〇 Saga3’s[23] random number routine.

The [reference address] also had a [number of steps] and [elapsed time] Shiro could completely memorize. But——

“……There is…… because of…… Shiro’s taste……”

“Just what kind of taste is that…… what do you think would happen if the random number adjustment required me to be completely naked!?”

“……? It would be fine, if you just stayed, fully naked……?”

“If a middle-aged man was fully open while bringing around two little girls, the police would go crazy, right!?”

…… *It might be too late for that already,* Shiro thought quietly.

Maybe she had already given up, but, Steph, after plucking out some grass, was blowing a grass whistle while gazing at the blue sky; the only thing echoing was its languorous sound.

Chapter 2 — Over-Explanation(Whodunit)

Floating on the threshold of death, Miko——saw a distant dream.

That was a distant……a memory that was so far old, that for a dead person it was comparable to the eternity,.

But for the girl who didn't desire anything, wandering alone for an eternity, until falling asleep——she saw such a dream……

————…………

The girl recognized for the first time——was the universe wriggling into creation.

It wasn't even creation and destruction, the wriggling heaven and earth merely painted over creation with creation.

The girl asked——[What place is this], [Who am I].

The universe had nothing that could reply, but what did——was the girl's [Quintessence].

Her [Quintessence] replied——[This is a planet(star)], [Thou is a god].

But the girl's next query, her [Quintessence] simply remained forever silent without responding.

——[What is a god] ——……

In that long silence, the girl simply took up a single brush, continued questioning, continued writing.

Just a few words, she waited to the end for something to reply, but what arrived were only the fires of war.

Turning towards the conflicting gods breaking the star, the girl who asked merrily——received only an idle reply.

Who are you——*I am a god.* What is a god——*A god is a god*——…………

——The girl didn't know, but Miko drifting in her memories knew.

She didn't have an "ego" on that star——to still question [why].

The lonely philosopher who held her knee questioning eternally——disappointed, fell into an eternal slumber.

At the end of that eternity, there had been but a single one. Embracing lovingly only that answer she earned at the end——

【————Yes. Until thou awakened me.】

With the resounding voice, the drifting far away Miko's consciousness was lifted up…………

————…………

[……I wonder……? Why, am I still alive?]

Looking around to her surroundings, Miko noticed her eyes were——no.

She didn’t have any of her senses.

Within the unclear silence, she heard the familiar voice echoing inside her consciousness.

【——Denial. If you release this hand, then your soul will soon fall off the dew and disappear. 】

Those words belonged to that girl, the [Quintessence], she harbored within her body for many years.

It was a voice that *sounded* to be emotionless, lifeless——without any warmth.

[I see. But we can’t talk if I die, you know? See, it’s exactly because we can’t, you even became the *dew,* right.]

Somehow, it seemed her soul was being held——literally, “in the palm of God’s hands”.

Although she didn’t seem to not only have a mouth and throat, but not even a body——Miko laughed loudly.

Maybe it was because that didn’t please her, but……

【——Thou. For scheming against god, know your place. 】

For one instant, Miko’s consciousness was certainly cut off.

She surely should’ve “died” in the palm god put her power into——but she remained completely aloof regardless.

I admit it. Even proudly. That I deceived an Old Deus, and used her——and that’s because——

[Isn’t “the one who got deceived the one at fault”, a rule of this world(Disboard)?]

——Once again, her consciousness got cut.

Did she die for a single moment again?

[I wish you’d stop killing and resurrecting me as you please. It’s making my blood run cold——ah but I also don’t have blood, do I?]

【——Thou schemed. Twice. 】

The god’s words of condemnation were words that, just by themselves, would bring annihilation if it weren’t for the [Ten Oaths]. But——

[Why are you *sulking?* I guess that means the game must be proceeding as expected, huh.]

That’s right, if it’s proceeding just like she schemed, then——

As if replacing the reply, Miko’s field of vision opened even though she didn’t have even one of her five senses.

She saw each one of the participants proceeding on the spiral drawn by the lands and separated as squares.

Apparently, things are all proceeding as planned——

[——You will lose you know?]

She laughed pleased, even forgetting she was in a situation where she was immersed in death to the top of her head.

【Affirmative. That may happen to a god deceived twice by the Provisional Fee——everything is possible, with nothing to be gained.】

The god's face as she said that couldn't be seen.

But her voice didn't contain any traces of emotion, concern or interest at all.

Desiring nothing, expecting nothing, discarding everything as if it was meaningless, the same as worthless——

【I care not for what will happen. Winning or losing——all that changes is the [outcome]. The [conclusion] will not change.】

——It seemed to be…… just like a child sulking.

【Thou schemed and betrayed——from the moment thou *sold* me, the limit of the solution thou seeks would not change anymore.】

Miko gave a wry smile since the girl wasn't aware herself.

Miko knew——no, she couldn't understand.

She simply found out that it was like that.

For an Old Deus——for that girl, even the way to measure the time itself seemed to differ from theirs.

Those eyes overlooking countless branches of futures, and even the possible worlds, could already see the outcome of this game——in that case, surely it must be seeing what lied ahead of that outcome, as if it were countless predetermined facts.

But.

[It'll change…… the outcome and also the conclusion, *along with you.*]

——*It's useless.*

For starters, from the moment *she was deceived by Miko,* it was clear there were things unknown even to the gods.

That's even more true when it's about "this girl" ——Miko erased her laugh from her voice.

[I schemed, deceived, and betrayed you. The first time unintentionally, the second time intentionally. Still——]

With a tinge of loneliness dyeing her voice, Miko even so spoke——aggressively.

[*I did not tell any lies*. If you didn't understand that, then that's the limit of what you can see.]

——When she told Miko, “thou sold me”.

In the end, the transcendental race’s recognition, its range of comprehension…… was ***“just to that degree”***, she thought.

[I——and those people; they will also bring you along, *beyond that*.]

That’s why she still declared, fearlessly.

[*Skepticism is synonymous with trust*. The move which you don’t know of and I also once gave up on——that will drag both the outcome and conclusion along with the entire world, and change it all…… don’t you think the move that will pull in such a future——will be a sight to behold?]

————

【So they are what will pull it in——I see, so that must be what thou calls a ‘spectacle’.】

The scenery captured in God’s eyes.

It was reflected in the vision it shared with Miko——the figure of the ones approaching.

…………

[P-Probably…… surely…… ah…… I wonder if it was too precipitated……?]

——*It’s alright…… it should be. Probably, maybe…… surely*——

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——152th square.

The place they are aiming for with their third move was the 204th square.

Based on Shiro’s map, it was a plain grazing the country of Haywest, the Elven Garde’s territory on the Andalusia Continent.

From the rocks, it dissolved into an aqua color until the barren wilderness halfway forming a desert.

The ones gathering attention from the pinnacle, reaching for *the ends of possibilities* even god didn’t know of were——right now,

“Hyaahahh screw that about walking with a person’s legs, relying on tools is how we do it!”

——*The potential of humans lies not on their bodies but on their wisdom!* or so he was shouting loudly.

A Harley ran through——splitting the wind, and tearing through the wasteland.

The roar of the engine hit the atmosphere as it went to *the end of the period*, literally roaring through it.

“S-Soraa!? Just what is thisssssss!?”

“……Ni, Nii…… r-reduce…… the, speed……”

The middle-aged man, pushing the two screaming children (provisionally two years old) into the sidecar, roared.

“Don’t say something so rude, sister! Can’t you hear it——the voice of the wind, telling me to become the light!!”

Towards her older brother, whose eyes through the rider goggles were harboring madness while saying some ambiguous things.

Shiro thought——*it traced back to a few hours ago*……

————…………

It’s been 14 days since the start of the game——they’ve ran out of food supplies.

“I’ve had enough…… I wanna go home, or rather, it’s already over so everyone will die ahahahaha.”

“……Nii…… can Shiro…… reach, the…… goal……?”

“Ah, a pink elephant is flying~…… it won’t take much if we ride on that♪”

The three of them were still in their second move——walking like ghosts on the 58th square, where they performed the random number analysis(ritual).

……In the first place, it was by a miraculous luck they managed to get hold of a cart so quick.

Losing the cart, they procured substitute legs, and in the end they even made a bicycle on their own and proceeded——

But the road-less path extending for 580km was far too harsh for such a quickly-made ride.

Every time they lost the ride they struggled to obtain, their hearts came closer to breaking——and unaware of it.

——*I would rather walk than that*, and the three of them unthinkingly stepped forward with their own legs.

Only their dice increased smoothly, depending on whom stepped on Sora and Shiro’s tasks——but.

Sora and the others simply kept walking mindlessly, evading the sun, escaping from the rain and getting frightened of wild animals.

After spending more than two weeks like that, they exhausted their food supplies, and finally fell into despair——it was at that time.

Their vision blackened——they reached their destination——at the end of the 119th [Square Movement(loading)].

The place where the outcome of [58] pointed to…… was the 120th square, the one with the【Task】.

Those three were standing up lonely on the open wilderness——and like them, there was a single billboard standing alone.

——【Answer the name of this motorcycle’s maker. If you can answer it, then you can take it!】

At the side of the billboard, where they read one sentence *written by Sora and Shiro themselves*, was *that.*

A high-consumption large-sized motorcycle vehicle with a side-car attached, making its engine growl and with the fuel tank full.

Like always, it was a task that only Sora and Shiro could answer——and, although unlikely, maybe Jibril——in other words.

——[Harley][24].

Throwing the dice once again, Sora rode on the Harley smiling at the miracle witnessed by God——

“Hahah!! Using over half of the Tasks for [*legs*] really paid off! Roar, V-Type Air-Cooled DOHC Evolution Engine!![25] Run through the spiral’s horizons, now, until the sky!!!”

——And that’s how it became like that.

“……Ni, Nii, did you, have, a license……?”

Shiro asked the obvious while the wind hit her face, trying distract herself from the fear.

There’s no way he had that.

Forget about the license for a large bike, he had no experience on driving anything aside a granny’s bike.

The community of the hikikomori NEETs don’t even have the slightest motivation needed to obtain something like that.

“The license to ride a Harley? Hah, of course I have——”

But the reply of her older brother as he raised his thumb with all his heart went over——diagonally above her expectations.

“The burning *soul of an old man*! The *American spirit!!* Right here in my heart!!”

“……Nii, we are, Japanese…… also, it’s unclear if we, have even the Yamato-Damashii[26]…… since we are hikikomoris.”

The shout came from provisionally 43.2-year-old virgin, Sora, who collected Shiro and Steph’s dice——

“……Furthermore, that’s a ‘misrepresentation of age’ ……come back, to sanity……!”

Regardless of the age he appeared, she asserted the inside was *definitely* the 18-year-old virgin Sora, but.

“Calm down, sister…… your brother’s heart had never before been this much enlightened. It’s alright?”

Shiro nodded insecure, as her brother once again started speaking weirdly while smiling like a Buddha.

That change without any context was the best proof nothing was okay at all, but——

“People are distinguished based on the country they were born——would you say something so sad?”

——*We are the world; we are the children.*

Seeming about to sing like that, Sora looked at the distance through the goggles.

“Would you be unable to know about Yamato if you haven’t been born on Japan? Feel the Yamato and honor the Yamato…… Is that something you cannot do, as long as you weren’t born inside the frame border known as the Japan drawn on the map? Your brother doesn’t think so.”

“……That…… is…… b-but, Nii——”

“America——that’s a good example. The only ones considered Americans are its citizens——right?”

“……Y-yes…… it’s a country, of immigrants……but”

“However, both those of American birth and the immigrants pride themselves of the America. Touch the heart and know the mind. Not as a frame border——but on the moment they touch that heart built up by the people, that heart will also dwell in them.”

——*Therefore, it’s not a problem of birth.*

As her brother revised his Buddha smile and yelled with a Kongōrikishi[27] smile, Shiro became convinced.

“I touched the Harley(heart) and an *AMERICAN* dwelt there——**I already am America!!**”

——*What should I do…… Nii is broken……*

“W-Well, besides, that’s just in public isn’t it? Aren’t those Earth’s legislative regulations? There aren’t any policemen here either, are there?”

The self-proclaimed American complemented while mumbling with such a chicken heart.

“Shiro, it’s not just my impression right~ Sora is already no good.”

Although reluctant, Shiro held the exact opinion as that disheartened comment, so she said out of despair.

“A-And also——well, isn’t it about time to consider a serious problem……?”

“Problem!? There are no problems! Put the love from the America, and——*let it be(what will be will be)*!!!”

“……Nii…… the Be〇tles[28], are…… from England……!”

“As if I’ll let that whatever it may be happen!! S-Shiro understands too don’t you? Like picking up flowers——”

“……Shiro, is a bishoujo…… and bishoujos, don’t use…… toilets……”

“Eh, what did you say!? It’s hard to hear due to the engine and the wind so please speak louder!!”

The flow went with her older brother developing (physically) a protagonist's deafness disease followed by a combo of sexual harassment, but she went with the flow and ignored it.

Shiro took out a tablet PC from the rucksack crushing Steph, and thought.

……*Rather, it's normal* for her brother to be this broken......

——It's been over 18 days since the game started…… 436 hours and 18 minutes to be accurate.

Their food supplies been exhausted, the fatigue was piling up, let alone they haven't had much sleep.

Even if it's not monsters…… dangers *enough to kill people*, like wild dogs, insects, and weather where everywhere.

It was a long journey that's scarce even in environments where one could relax and rest——it would be weirder if one didn't break down.

……Though there was one exception, who was carried on the back whenever she got tired of walking, and would rest on the chest when laying down.

Except for Shiro, who had "Nii" ——the best portable bed that allowed her to have a sound sleep regardless of the place.

Then from here on it's my own job, Shiro murmured on her mind, and started her thoughts——*sorting situation, start.*

——*The names, number of dice possessed, including their provisional ages ——are as it follows:*

Sora with [*24*] *dice——43.2 years old.*

Shiro with [2] *dice——2.2 years old.*

Steph with [*1*] *die——1.8 years old.*

The reason why Shiro and Steph are infants obviously wasn't for the sake of the Harley's license(Old man Soul).

If they become smaller, then the amount of food supplies they need will reduce.

When walking, they would give priority to the stamina, and would redistribute the dice.

The reason why Shiro would keep two dice and Steph one, was so her dice wouldn't reach zero if her task was coincidentally broken through.

It was exactly because they repeatedly adjusted the dice based on the situation accurately that they came this far——but.

The one who carried the burden born from that repetition without letting even a single complaint slip out was——her brother.

And as a result, Sora suffered a major damage——one making people think the only reason he hasn't sunk yet was because he's the flagship.

Steph——had excluded her requests along with her thoughts.

She would live strongly with *‘there’s no shame since I don’t even have panties’* spirit——conclusion.

(……There’s an urgent need to secure…… food supplies, for Nii…… and an environment, which Nii can get, a good sleep……)

——Current position, 152th square.

At somewhere grazing the western border of a country on Elven Garde’s territory, Haywest.

Number of dice and number of remaining squares until the [Objective], the estimated time and amount of fuel necessary——

“……Ah.”

Pinching the LCD of the Tablet PC, Shiro widened the map showing there.

Discovering “a certain thing” barely included on the current coordinates’ square, she raised her voice.

She immediately made a formula——no, she indexed a *calculative formula*, and murmured.

“……Nii…… at 2.4km to the east from here…… there’s a small city…… and an…… ‘inn’……”

“Inn!? Lodgings! Aren’t inns good when you’ve been camping outside without taking a bath for more than two weeks!?”

Being crushed by luggage and Shiro, Steph reacted with full force to that murmur, even faster than Sora.

——*There’s also a toilet there*, though Steph didn’t say it, she took a single glance at Shiro, who nodded.

But Sora slightly frowned his eyebrows, dubiously.

It’s just natural, Shiro thought inside her mind.

That’s because Shiro *did not mind it* even though the word “bath” popped up ——but.

“It’s fine! Hurry up and go already! Hurry, hurry up! The flower! The flower is!!”

“……You, saying flower in a situation like this, you sure are strong huh…… what will you do with something like a flower, eat it?”

“Right! Now! If you don’t head there then——I’ll jump down, alright!?”

“I-I got it, I said I got it! Really, and we finally got that tension out……”

Sora said in a good condition, but just good enough to not let her notice it was the last shine before the candle burned out.

Pouting——he reluctantly lowered the bike’s body.

Drifting loudly, he made the sidecar float while making a turn and raised up sand——

“Hyaaaaaaaaaah is this vehicle unable to turn around without doing thissss!?”

“That is right !!”

——Shiro even got moved at the lie her brother instantly replied without a single moment of hesitation.

“Is that so! Then it can’t be helped righttttttttttttttttttt!!”

With Steph’s screams as the klaxon, the bike went heading towards the small forest.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——On the same 152th square…… coincidentally at the same time.

There was a figure of a man kicking the ground while running on all fours, trying to overtake that klaxon.

It was Hatsuse Ino with four dice——provisionally 39.2 years old, wearing a black and red aura.

The red vapor, was proof of the [Blood Devastation] ——it was the vaporization of the boiling blood, but,

“Yes, well, it was my mistake alright? It may be a blunder I committed without a single speck of intention, but you know what?”

——The pitch-black color was proof of the laughing beast’s boiling killing intent while baring its fangs.

Ino was enraged. He was boiling with more rage than he ever did before.

Two moves before, Ino stopped on a certain square and was told so by the voice that echoed:

————[Pluck out the thingy in your crotch and die for the sake of the world.] ——Death, through the【Task】he wrote himself.

Naturally, Ino closed his eyes——*You’ll kill people, so you also will get killed.*

He long since prepared himself for that natural retribution, but he still shed a single tear for the sake of his prided son who would get plucked out.

And then, after a few minutes, or maybe a few hours, waiting for his own death after accepting everything ——he finally noticed.

His tasks didn’t contain any specifications and, as such, there was no coercive power……

——At the same time, he cried in relief since he kept praying Izuna wouldn’t step on his tasks.

He prayed…… every hour he would bow down on the ground and make a wish for Miko-sama.

He burned with regret and repentance.

He prayed…… he even wholeheartedly begged that Sole God for the first time in his life while shedding tears of blood.

Hey almighty shitty brat residing on the heavens, do something good once in a while.

His prayers were answered——the cute Izuna wouldn't die due to his own foolishness anymore.

But it wasn't goodwill making that come true——it was a mocking voice.

Thus he realized that——*in this world, there isn't anyone who will listen to prayers of goodwill.*

This world is simply and merely filled with evil intentions…… *it must be corrected no matter what.*

And for the moment, there was someone who certainly noticed it yet still incited him——that monkey.

——Ino's initial speculation was this.

Unlike himself, the clever Izuna would certainly notice the true intention of this game, and be victorious.

Then it'd be fine if I just ***obliterate Sora without fail****, and transfer the dice to Izuna when the opportunity arrives.*

But——that'd be troubling now, Ino thought while shaving his own life, sprinting towards the goal.

If he reached the goal, then all of his requests would be granted——then.

——*I must run aiming for the world's victory known as "make Sora-dono die" no matter what*——!!!

His rationality spoke…… *you reap what you sow.*

Rather, there's too much leniency since the retribution for trying to kill someone ended up being just that.

Why do people fight——they fight for the sake of peace, isn't that putting the horse before the cart?

But after things came this far, it's too late to act intelligently now.

Why do they fight? ——It's because they are stupid.

Then as the fool strangling his own neck while going for yours and holding a misplaced anger now, I'll bark like the fool I am.

——In other words.

"It seems I can't calm down unless I bury my fist in that face at least once, isn't that so, damn monkey?!"

THIS! ——IS THIS!!
THAT! ——IS THAT!!

“Eh, excuse me for the rudeness, although I don’t think I’m being rude in the least. Are you Hatsuse Ino-sama?”

……Ino hardened his resolve, and even shaved off his life as he sprinted in order to surpass that sound.

But then that absurd——Jibril abruptly asked with an air of composure, while going in parallel with him.

“Hahaha…… although it can be expected of a birdbrain, but even birds have good sight, you know?”

Even if he became younger, there was but one single male Werebeast in this game.

After Ino acted sarcastically, Jibril gazed at a book for some reason——gave a single nod, and——

“Please excuse me for that…… I never really cared much about the distinction between a Warbeast(canine) and a beast(dog) aside from whether they walk on two feet or four legs, so something like their gender is——ah, how about this: if you remain on four legs for all eternity, wouldn’t you also be classified with the [beasts] and decrease the number of items in the dictionary by one!?”

Jibril said so with a full smile, Ino unintentionally stopped on his feet.

——He quietly stood up on two legs and showed a wordless rejection.

“A-ah~…… what a pity——well, let’s put that aside ❤”

She made a regretful face for a single instant, but maybe she didn’t really care about that——she suddenly pointed to the forest,

“There are three presences of Imanity over there——two of them are the Masters, right?”

“……? ……Why, would you ask that to me?”

“No, it was just a little greeting and…… ah, please continue crawling on the ground from now on too ♪”

——The sub-audio said *“I have no more use to you so disappear”*.

Sending off Jibril’s back as she jumped and went off with a smile, Ino said out doubtful.

“……Why, is she still here?”

That absurdity can teleport as much as she wants——no.

Even if it was sealed due to the rule of proceeding through the squares with the dice, it was someone who could calmly follow him, even though he was running with enough force to reach the speed of the sound.

What reason could she have for still being here——rather——

Why would she purposefully tell Ino she was going to greet Sora and Shiro——?

"……Are you telling me to cool down my head a bit——and '*question it*'?"

That uncomfortable feeling——the true nature of this game Ino had yet to understand.

That act was something far too unbecoming of Jibril…… but——

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——On the eastern border of the 152th square, there was a city…… just like Shiro calculated.

Elven Garde, in a country town in a remote place at the suburbs of the Haywest province——a *fragment* of it.

There was one part of a [human village] barely reflected on this Sugoroku, since the square breaks down just a little further ahead.

That place was nothing more than scraps just a little further ahead from the border of Elven Garde——but.

Compared to Elkia——no, even with the previous world, the cultural differences were dimensions apart.

A style with its own sophistication that one would hesitate to call it an "architecture".

The house and the road *woven* with trees elegantly blended into the forest filled with gorgeous colors from the watery light released by the jellyfish-like flower swimming in the air.

Though in such fantasy-like [Forest(city)] taken out by god——there weren't any signs of elves, the residents.

——Everyone must have let out exclamation marks at that scenery, and stood still.

That highlight was one that must've made the game designer display all the sense he had in his spirit.

But what had echoed without any intention of reading the mood was——

——*Popo-papapararara~n* ♪

"Sora obtained a mysterious grass——wait, this again, I've already had enough of you, damn it!!"

Making the sound effect himself, the middle-aged man shouted while slamming the flowing [mysterious grass] to the ground.

Before the urgent hunger, both admiration and emotion won’t be of any use.

Fully ignoring the scenery, the 43.2 years old Sora violently rode through the house, Harley and all, and rummaged it.

“……Nii, the elves…… are, vegetarians……”

“That’s a lie, right!? Then where the hell did the nutrients from Fiel’s breasts came from!? Even for cows with their fats, they don’t inflate like that, right?! There should be at least rice, meat and meat somewhere right!?”

Guessing by the sound effect——it was the “Hero’s” privilege of the eight Dra*** Que**[29].

After arbitrarily entering people’s house and making a household inspection, he then claims a mysterious authoritarianism, but.

When a grimy middle-aged man does that, it’s unmistakably the burglar act of a “bandit” ——

“……Can, I ask…… something……?”

“Hii!? W-What’s it is? D-Does Shiro wants me to, w-wash your clothes too?”

The young girl secretly drying her washed clothes jumped at Shiro’s voice and laughed nervously.

Having fully ignored the scenery just like them, she ran around searching for *something* at the same time they invaded the house——and then.

——After a [Biee~en] voice echoed, the 1.8 years old Steph came back with a single towel.

While *measuring the distance* with a shuffle——Shiro asked.

“…………L, size……?”

“It’s S! ——wait that’s wron——wha——I have no idea what is this talk about——*Biee-en*!!”

Noticing there was no smoothing it, Steph dived onto the bed as if to run away from Shiro.

And then in just a few seconds, she sank into a dream——this time, it was to run away from reality.

……For starters, they were completely exhausted.

Not a single one of them could afford to care about the scenery.

Sora couldn’t nor did Steph and——obviously Shiro couldn’t either.

That’s right, that was because even now, Shiro was ferociously filling her small head with *a certain calculation*.

The reason they came here, the reason why she induced her brother to come to this place, and even the sentences threw at Steph, everything.

It all was for the sake of the “formula” that would be perfected *if she removed Steph from this place*——

——Theorem Proving Project, commencing the re-verification of the variable(situation).

Induction of [Point N(Nii)] into the Specified Coordinates(this house)——Confirmed.

Existence of the necessary project values(bath) in Specified Coordinates(this house)——Confirmed.

Established Project, variation of the variable values(dice) by three points——Confirmed.

Turning the Established Project's variable values(delivery) constant——Point N(Nii) twenty-four, Point S(Shiro) two——Confirmed to be possible.

Removal of floating random number(Steph)——Confirmed.

——Re-verification is over.

Induction's Functional Equation——Proving is possible.

(…… Now, Nii——let's, start, the certification(game)……?)

Saying so inside her mind, Shiro showed a wicked smile behind Sora's back——Sora and the two gourds.

Sora sensitively perceived that disturbing presence and what lied beyond his gaze was——.

"——Wait, whaaaat!? Shiro, tha——that's dangerous!!"

Shiro's figure could be seen extending her hand above a high shelf after piling up many platforms.

Sora hurriedly embraced Shiro, her foothold was wavering unstably as if almost collapsing, and roared.

"——Damn! Just why are you pretending to be playing Dra◯est[30] while letting a two-year-old infant work, are you stupid or what, Sora provisionally 43 years old! It's exactly because you're like that you're still are a virgin even after your forties!!"

Until now, Sora has been accurately and finely controlling the situation and adjusting the number of dice.

But now that exhaustion reached the extreme, he noticed, although late, he forgot about the distribution of the dice and said.

"……My bad, Shiro. I should've noticed it earlier——erm……?"

While being held up by her brother, Shiro lowered her face——and thinly laughed.

Sora was looking at the shelf Shiro extended her hand to——and this…… is what he is thinking.

——*How about I return a few dice to her.*

That's what he's thinking…… that's what you would definitely end up thinking.

For starters, it was a height Shiro couldn't reach, even if he returned eight dice to her and she went back to ten dice——her original age.

The brother's excellence on situation judgment would fetch Shiro's intention ——desire to help with searching for supplies.

And he'll will determine that——*it wouldn't be bad to have more manpower*.

"Hm. Then, I'll keep ten——I'm alright with the 18-year-old body, so I'll hand you the remaining fourteen, okay Shiro?"

——*That's right, he'll definitely do that.*

Shiro gulped, and nodded with her head.

Until here it's exactly as I calculated——Shiro seemed apologetic, though it was to hide the faint smile she let overflow.

Those dice he shared were age.

The original value was equivalent to [ten] dice, so if you increase or decrease it by one——*the age would increase or decrease* by a tenth.

And so, if Shiro who's holding two dice were to receive the fourteen dice handed out by Sora,

——She would possess [sixteen dice].

Receiving the long-awaited dice——Shiro laughed.

(…… Bye bye, loli body…… Bye bye, flatness——)

Immediately following, Shiro's body got enveloped in light——her limbs suddenly grew and stretched.

The little Steph was sleeping peacefully——Shiro envisioned her original appearance.

She had breasts filled with dreams——even though she's just a Steph.

She had a gorgeous and selfish body——even though she's just a Steph.

That was…… but now, laughing with her nose, she murmured in her heart.

——*I feel bad for tricking you, but this is also part of the job(game), see…… I'll be going ahead of you, Steph.*

Farewell, the Shiro with an underdeveloped body……

Welcome, the Shiro with a gorgeous body……!

With that body, the first formula would be completed——basically, if she's just *seducing Nii* then——!

…… If she did that, then……

"……………………huh?"

The one who murmured that was Sora——who returned to being 18 years old with ten dice.

“…………What? ……? …… Nii, this……?”

But——*Is it just my impression?* the one troubled was Shiro who looked up to her brother.

The fact her height of vision remained the same as she’s used to was only her impression…… wasn’t it?

Shiro tilted her neck, gave a smile, and suddenly let her hands slip on her breasts,

…… Flat. Flat, flat flat flat……

“……Nii, it’s as flat as a board, you know? …… It’s quite flat, isn’t it!?”

The lights disappeared from Shiro’s eyes at the *sensation of stroking nothing but air.*

Shiro couldn’t help but laugh at the sensation of the ground beneath her feet collapsing——along with her calculations.

"Ca-caaaalm down Shiro! I-It's alright, you have grown properly."

It was the greatest shock she suffered ever since the game's start——no, ever since she was born.

Seeing Shiro burn out and her already pale face turning gray, her brother gave a follow-up in panic.

"It's, well, *that thing*! Even if the number of dice increase, it doesn't necessarily mean everyone will grow up equally or something like that!?"

The brother who was a middle-aged man until a little ago lied——no, he attempted to make a gentle hypothesis but,

……*I know. That's wrong,* Shiro self-deprecatingly smiled deeper.

Indeed, it's exactly as her brother said, she certainly had "grown".

Her limbs had extended slightly and her fat loli stomach, too, had recessed.

——By the way, it'll deviate from the talk, but.

You knew she'd be fine even if she continued being a truant since there's no [grade repetition] in Japan's primary schools, didn't you?

Even Shiro, who didn't go to school even once since enrolling, is listed as a [primary school fifth grade student] on paper.

But——including the fact she was aware her own growth was bad even for a fifth grader, she wondered.

How about we liken this "growth" or whatever to this:

——After multiplying her age by 1.6 times, she finally *became a fifth grade schooler.*

If you line up by order of height, then out of the fifth graders——she'll be *the first one in the front*, right!!

"S-Shiro, stay strong!! It simply proved that Shiro is a perfected beauty!!"

"……I, don't care, anymore…… Nii…… Shiro…… is, tired……"

"Wait wait wait, hey Shiro! Don't raise your thumbs and try to go to heaven with a nice smile, hey!!"

——A smooth breeze rustled gently.

While she felt her soul turn into dust and blown by the wind, her brother's voice sounded distant——

Shiro cursed——everything, had betrayed her.

She had been betrayed——by the future.

She had been betrayed——by the world.

A selfish and gorgeous body…… breasts filled with dreams——she would never become like that……

While Shiro’s consciousness fell, as she gave up on everything——

“————————!!!!?”

“Uwaaaah!? W-What is it this time!?”

——Suddenly, a lighting ran through as if anchoring her consciousness as it sank.

And following the tsunami of information surging through her brain, Shiro firmly stepped on the floor and endured.

——When people confronts death, it’s said they see a revolving lantern.

That is, in order to escape the predicament, they search through each and every memories and knowledge.

It’s said it’s a phenomenon of abnormal activity——where the brain would overcome its limits.

……About the matter of it being a despair worthy of death for Shiro, let’s put it aside for now.

Shiro entrusted her body to the sensation of her brain circuits burning, and ferociously pulled the information in.

I feel like——there’s something——

She felt it was an “insight” ——one that would rebuild the collapsed equation——!!

——[List].

Every entertainment product like games, comics and movies her brother played, watched and finished reading during the span of eight years after meeting Shiro.

Normal games: a total of 23.671.

Eroge[31]: a total of 1.852 titles.

Comic titles and erotic doujin[32] magazines: a total of 85.743 volumes.

Anime: a total of 2465.

Live-action dramas and movies: a total of 867 series.

——[Sort].

Characters from within those who are specially liked by her brother——A total number of 874 [brides].

Without missing a single one, she forcefully aligned her mind with videos, manga, and voice, adding up the *information.*

Every kind of information described in magazine articles, conquest guides and collection of settings——In other words.

Along with various other information, the *settings about their age, height and three-sizes!*

They are coherently being digitized, turned into statistics, graphics, and analyzed——!

"……Erm, Shiro, -san? Now what are you——"

——Shiro's brain probably has the most prominent capacity out of all humanity.

And right now it was being unknowingly abused, overcoming its limits in an unprecedented waste.

As Shiro simply glared ghastly at the floor, Sora timidly asked.

But time passed without it reaching her ears, and after a few seconds Shiro concluded.

——*[Work out].*

Sora——her brother's liking, his tastes, preferences and fetishes, all of these were mathematically indexed and calculated.

That's right, mathematics doesn't tell lies…… putting it bluntly——her brother's tastes are:

Age——the person's exterior settings will be calculated with the average height and age——average value [12.344…… old].

Body type(Three-sizes)——bust-waist-hip——average value [77.2 : 59.873 : 78.23].

Settings(Relations)——younger ratio [61.1%], little sister ratio [48.4%], big-breast ratio——a minor [3.2%].

——*[Conclude]——!!!*

"……. I'm, glad…… so Nii…… was…… undoubtedly…… a loli-con……"

——The world got filled with light, as if an aurora ripped through the night.

Shiro fell into her knees, and looked up to the heavens——*there was still hope, a future.*

"——Hey little sister. I don't know what's going on, but wasn't Nii-chan greatly insulted right now?"

The brother who had mathematically and statistically been defined as a pervert groaned with his eyes half-open——but.

Insult? No way, it was salvation itself.

Shiro wiped her tears and stood up, as to not look unnatural.

——*I see, it seems that no matter how old I become, I'll remain with a loli body.*

I don't know if it's the truth, or if it's only within this game——but!

(…… Bye bye…… breasts filled…… with dreams…… but——)

——There's no…… problem.

Right, it's not a problem.

Shiro clenched her fists and howled, while pretending that she didn't notice that her heart was bleeding.

Now that it was revealed that her brother was a loli-con, there's no problem at all——!!

If Nii doesn't like it, then——

——If Nii doesn't need something like breasts, then——

——I don't, need——!

————SOMETHING, LIKE THAT————!!!

……Holding such a fierce resolution in her chest,

Shiro pretended to be calm, and attempted to rebuild the [Calculation].

The first equation crumbled miserably. But——

"……Nii…… Shiro…… is, tired…… I'll go…… take, a bath……"

"O, oh…… stay strong, okay! N-Nii-chan likes Shiro no matter how you look, you see!"

——That's right, if it's Nii then, he will say that.

With Shiro's dream——the future of a gorgeous body breaking in front of him, he will definitely say that.

But that's exactly why! It's still possible to prove the formula…… and the second equation is——!

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

……Sora followed Shiro's back, as they tottered while walking powerlessly.

"H-Hey Shiro. There's still room for growth even after seventeen years old. Cheer up, okay?"

"……Shiro…… is super, alright…… super, fine……"

She answered so with a voice that was like an example of the antonym of fine.

As Shiro voluntarily went to the bathroom of all things, Sora seriously reflected.

Shiro is 11 years old…… it's 1.1 years for each single die.

With 16 dice, it's 17.6 years——he shouldn't have handed out so many.

He knew Shiro was bothered by her child-like figure——although it's natural, since she is a child.

Not only that, but spending 18 days in such an extreme game, it's just natural for the mind and body to become weakened.

At such a time, what if he was carelessly handed more than the initial amount ——and ended up looking different than his own idealized appearance?

——Surely, it would be a shock.

It's because you don't understand that side of a girl's heart that you're no good——Sora clenched his teeth.

He followed the figure of his sister entering the dressing room with uncertain footsteps and called out.

"W-well, it's *that*. Take a rest. Right? Hurry up and enter the bath——"

——*If she takes a good sleep and some rest, maybe she'll recover a little bit.*

"……Hm…… wash…… my back……"

"That's it! Get your back washed! Get refreshed, okay!?"

Sora brightly nodded diligently at Shiro's answer and came out from the dressing room.

"……Wash…… my hair……"

"Yeah! Doing this stop-it-right-now great adventure for over two weeks is just too much, isn't it!?"

And then…… in what must be the bathroom since he didn't really understand the Elves architectural style.

Steam was rising without having a roof, so rather than a bathroom with the ceiling open.

——It was a hot spring.

Sora couldn't afford to care about something like the scenery until now, but his heart jumped at this open-air bath.

If one were to forget about everything and be healed in this bath, he would surely recover in one go, wouldn't he.

"……And so…… while…… washing…… Shiro's hair……"

Sora stood still as if he got charmed by the bathtub, but Shiro was——

"……Nii…… who's been storing it up…… will violate…… Shiro……"

……

…… Hm?

"……Being rough…… to Shiro…… like in a, erotic doujin……"

"……"

"……like, in an erotic, doujin……?"

"No, this silence isn't to make you say it twice you know? Erm?"

Though Shiro essentially remained with her back turned to Sora,

"——Why are you making it seems like we'll be entering together. Both your back and hair, the one who will be washing it will be——"

Having told her so, Sora looked around——but, the ones standing there,

"……Who…… will be the one washing it……?"

——Was just Shiro, who turned around showing a smile, without a single thread covering her body.

And Sora——who felt a shiver run down through his back, wearing a single towel wrapped on his hip.

He finally noticed he was in a situation where he was alone with his naked little sister, facing the bathtub.

"——No, no, no, no, that can't be *HAHAHA*, well well, you, wait a little?"

Sora diverted his gaze in a panic and stood still while sweating cold like a waterfall.

"S-Shiro, you're 17 years old, aren't you!? You must consider the rating, because how would you take responsibility if it gets prohibited——"

"……Nii, that's wrong……"

——*Why is it.*

With a smile that didn't hold a single speck of malice, Shiro took one step closer.

Taking one step back in follow, Sora thought.

——*Why is Shiro's smile this scary——!?*

"……Each one of, Shiro's dice…… *isn't*…… [1.1 years] ……"

——*I see,* Sora understood.

Although it's obvious, Shiro's age isn't exactly eleven years old.

Reaching her eleventh birthday, they came to this world(Disboard)——so it's eleven *and seven months*.

A single die for Shiro didn't turn into [1.1 years] ——but [1.15833…years].

——*But what about it. That's just a "measurement error", isn't it?*

**step* *step*——*

Step by step——as if seeing through what Sora was thinking in his mind while backing away,

Step by step——while Shiro approached smiling, Sora certainly heard what she answered.

——*That's correct. It's just a "measurement error".*

The worst kind of stuff that would confound every equation——a "measurement error".

With that measurement error, two of Shiro’s dice changed from [2.2 years] to [2.3166…years].

And it changed the [17.6] years Shiro have from the sixteen dice——

——Into [Above 18 years(18.533... years old)].

「今のしろ……十八歳以上ソウル……」
逃げ場も、言葉も絶たれた空は、
確信する。
これは――『口撃』だ。
ゴゴゴゴゴ
――裏切り合い、騙し合うゲーム。
だが、何故――唯一。
絶対に、裏切らないはずの者、よりによって白に。
――ここまで、追い詰められている――ッ！

“……I failed…… at fascinating you with a gorgeous body…… but……”

——*This is bad.*

Sora understood that he failed since it was too late.

Seeing his little sister murmur like that——he heard his instincts shouting.

——*He didn’t really understand why but,* this is——

“……The operation…… went exactly as I calculated, you see? Nii——”

——*A pinch.*

She let her mild voice bounce joyfully.

The smile that floated thinly trembled faintly with shyness.

Revealing her flushed body, the little sister leisurely approached——and *behind her,*

“……With this, Nii…… has no other option, besides entering the bath together, with Shiro…… right♪”

Sora certainly felt like he saw——a Shinigamishadow[33], laughing evilly while holding a great scythe.

step* *step

As the Death God——rather, his little sister approached step by step, Sora desperately attempted to resist with a hollow voice.

“B-But your looks haven’t changed that much——ah, no, f-f-for starters what’s inside is——”

“……Nii, had said…… *Old Man Soul*…… the current Shiro…… has an above 18-year-old soul……”

“No, no, no! Somehow that’s no good! According to things like law, regulations or organizations!?”

"……The Earth's law......is unrelated…… so does the policemen…… that's…… what Nii, said……"

——But, as Sora backed away, his back finally hit the wall.

Sora, whose words and escape had been cut off, was convinced.

This is——a [verbal attack].

Using Sora's own words as a weapon, Shiro was cornering him——

"……Nii, self-destructed…… you don't have, any excuse…… to escape……"

And then——she finally "slammed it on the wall".

Both of her hands, obstructing his left and right sides——though it was around his hip, due to the difference between each other's height.

Looking down on the ruby eyes which showed a joyful look, Sora thought.

——*Now, what will you do, Sora virgin, provisionally and also confirmed to be currently 18 years old.*

His escapeexcuse was cut off…… no——the fact that he cut it off himself "was used"——!!

Losing to Shiro——it would be a lie to say he wasn't frustrated, but it also happens everyday——but.

Sora felt the ground collapsing beneath his feet, having lost at [tactics] of all things——

…… *Wait. Wait wait wait——!?*

"——Hah…… haha, hahahahahahahahahaa!"

Sora laughed loudly, as a flash of light ran in his mind——in other words, an insight.

——He was about to get deceived.

Escape? An excuse to escape? That's unnecessary!

"Fufu, my little sister, listen well, alright? I'll accept your proclamation we're both 18 years old——but!"

That's right, this is still [Check]——it's not [Check-Mate]!

For starters——

——*Just why would they have to enter the bath together just because they're both 18 years old!?*

"Siblings who enter the bath together even after being 18 years old is truly the height of the unnatural!! If Shiro is also 18 years old, then you should go alone——"

Sora roared as he was convinced that the Check had crumbled, but——

——It had already been over 18 days since this game begun.

They kept going on extreme situations, with fatigue, hunger, wild animals, 【Tasks】 and——

They managed to survive until now while constantly feeling the Death God's scythe on their necks——and yet.

"……Nii…… do you, hate…… Shiro…… that much?"

——Shiro lowered her face and let her voice escape, a few words that sounded like she was hurt.

At that, Sora finally felt like the scythe had cut a piece of his neck's skin and his view darkened.

……

While hugging the naked Shiro whose face remained lowered…… Sora thought.

——What would be the reason for still saying [NO] even after receiving that line?

Is it because she's a child?

He had accepted the proclamation that they were both 18 years old——Refuted.

I-Is because she looks like a child?

Then will he insist on calling Shiro a child for her entire life? ——Refuted.

Is it because we're siblings? Refuted——It had been refuted by those few words——!

It was exactly because they were siblings, because he didn't hate her, that he could proudly stay together with her without any guilty feelings——

——Guilty feelings?

…… *There's something bugging me,* Sora thought vacantly.

(…… What. I feel like I'm about to notice something I shouldn't——furthermore)

With the height difference, Shiro's heartbeat could be felt at his hips through the skin.

The girl looked up to him, with her heart beating soundly, strong and big, like an alarm bell——

(…… Just what is it! Those eyes telling me to "notice" ——!)

——It's a game where people deceive and betray each other.

But why is it that Shiro of all people——the only one who definitely wouldn't betray him,

——Was cornering him this much——!

That's right, in the exactly moment when the Death God's scythe was about to slash Sora's windpipe——

"Excuse me for my rudeness, Master…… Is Sora-sama ——"

"Uwooah Jibril-kun!! Hey you!? Your dice are~erm~oh me! They decreased to two, didn't they!! What a serious deal, so hurry, I'll give you eight of mines! What, no need to hold back you mustn't alright heeey!?"

"Eh? Ah, haa……?"

——A brutal angel descended into the bloody bathhouse.

So no matter the number of her agedice, it won't affect her appearance huh——in any case.

For some reason the brutal angelMessiah appeared with sharp eyes, he then threw some dice at her.

——Immediately after, it seemed like her expression eased somewhat——but.

But for now, that doesn't matter in the slightest, Sora singed like he was dancing.

"Aah, what a tragedy! All people commit mistakes——My heart that accidentally turned into that of a minor due to the erroneous judgment! It has completely distanced itself from all erotic things, and is now within the Hell of despair, aah God! Once again you would steal from me the opportunity of bathing together with a girl——Is my sin that heavy of a thing!?"

Acting like an actor of a Shakespeare play, Sora, provisionally 3.6 years old, trembled in delight.

——*I'm saved.*

From what exactly, I don't really know.

Anyway, I survived from something, Sora turned to the heavens and showed his gratitude——but.

——**whoosh**…… A wind filled with killing intent brushed him, giving him goosebumps.

"……Jibril…… you really, don't…… read the mood…… I definitely……!"

The small Imanity girl Shiro spoke with a voice that echoed from the depths of Hell——and *behind*her.

Now, which could be visualized clearly even by Sora and Jibril——*that*.

"Ah, this, I'll die, won't I…… Master, what would be the great sin I've committed?"

"……My bad, I don't really know, either. But, seems like it was a *really* heavy sin……"

It even made the FlügelJibril count her own sins with a trembling voice.

——*Nothing was saved at all,* that was enough for Sora's eyes go blank.

The Death God holding a great scythe with an evil smile.

Now its face was distorted with killing intent, and was about to throw the scythe with an overthrow.

——-——……

Sora didn’t know. Let alone Jibril, who didn’t have any way of knowing.

For Shiro, this was truly a golden opportunity, a once-in-a-lifetime match.

Making her brother——*become conscious of her.*

In the span of eight years since she met him, not even once was a better situation, condition, and suitable time arranged.

And with Jibril’s arrival, it was ruined.

Even though she could have completed the formulagotten Nii if she just had a few more hours, no, a few more minutes——!

Yes, Shiro’s view burned with rage——but.

More importantly……

——A red cloth swayed with the wind……

“……Hmm. When you’re being this carefree, it even makes my rage and resentment disappear……”

A red cloth——a young macho stood erect in the bathtub, and his loincloth swam in the wind……!

Aah, no matter how you distort the logic, Shiro is a child ——Shiro thought.

Muscles pulsing like an independent organism——this indescribable shocking footage.

If one says watching R18G[34] that violates her mind——is a right, a duty of those with 18 year olds, then,

“……Shiro, is fine with, remaining…… an 11-yearoldchild *soul*……”

Leaving behind that murmur, Shiro fainted on the spot.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

“Fainting at the physical beauty of my body from my glory days…… Geez, falling in love once again?”

The lump of meatIno soaked on the bathtub with the worries of his younger days——thinking of the “time when he was too popular”, which was wholeheartedly irritating.

“……Hey, Geezer. Could you answer my question that suddenly sprouted just now?”

Making an effort to not look at him directly, Sora asked in a low, yet, shrunken voice of a 3.6-year-old.

“Would appearing in front of the masses fully naked be a rights infringement——a violation of the [Ten Oaths]?”

——*Hmm?* he lowered his gaze.

Ino then answered with a good smile.

“There’s no one who would be afraid of such a small thing. How about you live true to your desires?”

“What I’m asking is if it isn’t a violence to show around the grotesque footage of the ‘muscle doing fetal movements’! Like always, you don’t even get sarcasm, do you——also, don’t say small thing, it’s the circumstances of age, you know!?”

It’s just that a lot of things shrank because the dice decreased, Sora raised an assertion.

And as he strolled through the bathtub——he simply made a screen.

Shiro’s hand, which he was holding under it, trembled slightly.

His little sister who suffered a deep trauma from that very violence was——

“……Machos are scary…… uuuhhh, the meat, is…… attacking……”

She kept repeating delirious words due to the punishment that was far too heavy for a rating scam.

Likewise, from the other side of the screen——one more voice said.

“……Being hit awake and getting told [go wash Shiro’s hair] isn’t violence?”

“It can’t be helped right…… since Shiro completely snapped at Jibril……”

Like the flow of a river, Steph, taken along by Jibril, said sleepily.

Sora couldn’t see the other side of the screen——but.

Steph received six dice from Shiro and was washing her hair with the figure of a 12.6-year-old.

By the sound of the bubbles, Jibril should be getting stepped on by Shiro and at the bottom of the bath.

——And.

“……I can’t believe how you can give away the dice like that so carefree——that’s [life] you know?”

——Flatly.

Skepticism, confusion…… Ino’s murmur contained countless meanings.

Sensing the gazes gathering at him, even from those on the other side of the screen, Sora sighed.

“It’s not like there’s any problem, right…… as long as it doesn’t become zero, it’ll be the same thing even if it’s one or ten. And besides——”

But he waved his hand carefree, and pointed at Steph’s way with his chin.

“The problem is the same for everyone. For us, we can’t survive since the living capacity is null, right.”

——Silence.

It was a silence coming from each one’s own contemplation and deep emotions, but Sora shook his hands fluttered, as if he disliked that.

He changed the topic, as if to hide his embarrassment.

“Rather, just what did you guys come here for? Specially you, geezer——old man? In any case, you.”

Although as a result, I’ve been saved by these two’s appearance, Sora thought as he questioned their intention——

“Of course, I came here as soon as possible to crush Sora-dono’s balls[35], but what about it?”

“Hey, heyy!! At least change your words! I’ll cry a lot, damn it!!”

Even if violence is forbidden due to the Oaths——consider the heyday body of someone like Schwa-chan[36] for example.

After being told [I’ll *terminate* you] by said robot, if you didn’t freak out it would be a lie, right.

"But, I changed my mind. I'll leave killing you for last."

……Hohoo…… so you're saying [I'll kill you lastly] huh.

The next words are obvious——[*That was a lie*].

——This is bad. My balls will be crushed——!!

"……Sora-dono…… just how much do you know about the Eastern Union's history?"

——Suddenly.

At Ino's suddenly question, Sora, pondering furiously how should he escape, switched his thoughts.

……This surely it's the kind of flow where, depending on my answer, I can avoid the death flag.

"Even if you say history…… the Eastern Union is concealing most of its history, isn't it……?"

Sora answered while examining his words fearfully.

That's right——the Eastern Union is hiding its *detailed history* from the outsiders, just like their game's contents.

Though it must be because it's related to the "circumstances behind the development of the electronic gametrumph card"——in any case.

"That's why I'm restricted to what's in the books. There were various islands where tribal strife continued for over six thousand years——"

——It continued after the end of the [Great War], due to the differences in their physical features——.

In short, they divided into factions of either ***dog ears or cat ears*** *and kept fighting with their kindred.*

It's truly despicable, unforgivable. Why would you try to *say you're the better one?* Sora thought.

A great person once said——[*Heaven does not create one kemonomimi above another*][37]——!

Dog ears, cat ears and bunny ears, too——wouldn't it be fine if they're loved equally the way they are?

For those great treasures to fight and not envelope the world in love…… it's extremely inexcusable.

Although——I won't say where, but you see.

——*It seems there's also a world where they kill each other due to differences in the skin color?*

Thinking about that, Sora and the others aren't really in any position to say anything, or rather——

"One of the Three Great Powers, the Eastern Union, who pacified in half a century, and even obtained a method$_{\text{game}}$ of sure-victory against the other races."

Terrific, that single word wasn't enough to describe that *incredibly difficult feat.*

It's something which admiration and compliments shouldn't be spared.

I see, so this world has other intelligent living beings——the Exceed.

Do you think bringing them together is something easy if it's just one of them?

——*That dirty peace covered in brutality, filled with discrimination and prejudice for over 6,000 years?*

"If there was someone like Miko-san in the previous world——maybe wars would end someday, too."

"……That's unexpected."

"What is?"

"——I thought you'd say…… *if it's 'a feat accomplished with an Old Deus' power then it makes sense.*'"

But, *it was these very words Ino said that were completely unexpected.*

"Ahahahaha! What's this, Gramps! So you can tell some interesting jokes!"

Sora hit the water as he laughed out——and looked at the giant game board over his head.

"Pacifying a conflict zone in half a century? If such divine feat was something that could be done just by *praying to a mere god* then——by now, wars should have disappeared without a trace, even from our previous world!"

——Indeed, if it's what an Old Deus' power is capable of, then this scenerygame eloquently speaks for itself.

Mimicking the ground, distorting the law of nature, and creating a land of spiral in the sky——

If the energy required to make this possible was physically calculated, he wondered what number would appear.

He had no clue, but surely it must be equivalent to [almost infinite] ——it's indeed the deed of a "god".

It's the kind of unimaginable power overwriting the world and controlling the laws…… but.

——It's *completely futile.*

In this world, no matter how much power one has, right infringement isn't possible.

Much less——no matter which world, while *ending wars* is good, there's only one method to make peace.

"If it's an Old Deus behind [the Divine GamerMiko-san] being able to make such a 'negotiationgame', then I'll think this first."

And, as if looking at the figure of someone he respected with all his heart——Sora spoke to Ino.

"——Miko-san *is* using the Old Deus. And obviously, she's *outwitting her in a game*, right."

According to the Oaths——*neither of them* can infringe upon the other's rights.

Both Miko using the Old Deus, and also the Old Deus using Miko.

It's something only possible for the first time——after making an agreement, playing a game and "being victorious".

……

"…………So that's, how it…… is, huh…… Miko-sama."

At the end of a long silence, maybe he earned something ——Ino dropped his gaze with his shoulders.

He smiled bitterly.

"……Seems like I have overstayed a little too long…… it's about time for me to leave."

"I'm grateful for it. I can't relax in the long-awaited hot springs with those intimidating muscles around."

He looked at Ino's back as he stood up from the bathtub and left.

It seems I was able to evade the death flag, Sora secretly felt relieved——but.

"By the way, may I ask you one last thing?"

His heart jumped at Ino’s words, who suddenly turned around.

But, as if not knowing about it——though, there’s no way he could’ve known it——Ino questioned.

No——.

“The [Traitor] who retained its memories——Sora-dono, it’s you, isn’t it?”

——He affirmed.

The sound of Steph holding her breath could be heard beyond the screen.

If Ino was correct then it would explain why Sora talked about this game with an “assertive” tone.

I wonder if they thought something like this, Sora answered with a bitter smile.

“Hohou~? What basis are you using to say I am the [Traitor]?”

“What, is there a need for a basis?”

But after saying “No need for something like that”, Ino continued with a sharp gaze.

“If the Sole GodTet who gathered all the Exceed were to say [there’s a traitor]——then it’d be you, unconditionally.”

“Haha! How good, that’s really easy to understand! *Nice* reasoning!”

——*You guysSora’ existence itself is the basis*, even though he was told that, Sora clapped his hands and laughed.

Exactly——this game is something that started with everyone's agreement.

——If one accepted the rules at face value, then this is what the [Traitor] or whatever thing is implying:

On top of everyone confirming the rules, in order for them, alone, to escape the memory erasure——

They will deceive everyone——and it'll be as if *it was something everyone agreed upon*.

Sora isYou're the only one who could pull off such stunt, Ino gave him that "compliment"——but.

"Let's just say if it was me in that case, I would *doubt Tet* straight away."

——*And, if I had to say more,* Sora continued his words,

"I wouldn't go as far as doing that [impossibility] just for such a *stingy preparation*."

——Ino and, beyond the screen, Steph and even Jibil held their breaths in doubt.

The retention of the memories meant "knowing the real victory condition."

They seemed to question Sora's true intention for calling it a "stingy preparation" ——he smiled wryly.

——[The second explanation of the rules.]

There are "falsehoods" among it…… but.

No big lies were incorporated between the first and the second times.

When asked about erasing their memories——the danger anyone would consider immediately should be obvious.

——They will lie about the rule of “winning if you ascend” by saying *“you’ll lose if you ascend”*.

Greatly falsifying the rules should’ve been *sealed in advance*…… with “everyone’s consent”.

On top of that, *what would get falsified——?* No, *even before that——!!*

“We would worry over what to do about [movement] and [food] before preparing something like that, right!! If we didn’t get the [legsHarley] then forget about the goal, it’s doubtful whether we would even live and reach fifty-two more squaresthe next stop, you know!?”

“——Ah~…… there’s nothing but persuasiveness there……”

Sora nodded, having the suspicions cleared due to the scathing thoughts which only those who went through the same life-and-death situation could relate to.

——That’s right——a preparation of just that level is still a long way from [Victory].

And [　　]Kuuhaku*’s methods is always only one——namely ——*

“Since we’re going to prepare something, then——*we’ll prepare something critical*”

——Right, that’s——

“We’ll prepare it in a way that, no matter how things turn out, we will win.”

Resting his head in the stone edge of the bathtub, he looked directly into Ino’s eyes with anticipation.

Sora fearlessly, yet friendly——spoke.

“I would do that if it was me…… *anyone would do it*——

right?”

——*Of course.*

You did it, too, *right*? ——Sora’s eyes were telling him so.

“……I see. That’s natural……”

Like that, Ino looked down and left without turning around again——and on his back,

“——By the way. Can I also ask one thing?”

“What would it be?”

“……That’s, well. It’s about that one thing regarding the size of my arms. Is that during peacetime? Or for emergency?”

At Sora’s fearful question, Ino let out a smile and continued walking without stopping in his legs,

“Hahaha, unlike Sora-dono, I do have a heart that takes others’ feelings into consideration, you see——let’s just answer that I do not like hurting others for no reason and, as such, I will refuse to answer.”

“That’s answering it, isn’t it! You’re answering it, aren’t you!?”

As Ino laughed loudly and left while Sora still roaring at his back, abruptly,

“Master, you do not need to listen to a dog’s nonsense.”

Maybe Shiro finally forgave her since Jibril said so with her face peeking from the screen.

“Isn’t this something that’s also said in Masters’ world ——[*Too much is as bad as too little*[38]]——even if it’s unnecessarily big, there’s not really any benefit for girls ♪”

Beyond the screen, he could feel the girls nodding all together, but——

"……Right now, I'm having an unprecedented sense of alienation. Could it be, well——"

It can't be——could it be that I'm the only one who don't have any experience?

If that's true then that's a realitydespair I won't be able to recover from, and as Sora clang to it with his eyes,

"Please be at ease Master, for I am brand new. Dora-chan too is just a young woman with the knowledge——"

"——Huuh!? T-That's wron——wait I can't deny or affirm that, can I!! A-About the size of Sora's arms, you say, regardless of the possession or lack of experience, as long as you think about it normally you would die, wouldn't you!!"

"……It doesn't, matter…… everything about, that geezer, is…… disgusting…… scary…… *tremble*"

——Sora narrowed his eyes at the answering voices as it if was dazzling.

I'm glad——so I wasn't alone……

"If I had to add, then before becoming smaller with the decrease of the dice——Master *in his original size* also has nothing to lament about."

"S-Seriously……? S-So I'm alright?"

It wasn't about the current 3.6 years old Sora with two dice, but about the size of the original *Sora's Sora*.

Let's put aside how Jibril knows that for now, but if that moving library——I mean.

If he has the flying library causing natural disasters—Jibril's guarantee, then he can have some confiden——

"Yes. *It's a gentle size*——or better, I memorized it as being the ideal if the other party is a child ❤"

"……Jibril…… you're forgiven…… this is the best thing, you've said, this year……"

"I will give up on this game. Rather, I'll retire. I'll re-do the character creation……"

——*Right, let's re-do it, this life*——as Sora let out tears,

"Aah Master please wait! This Jibril was talking about how it would be fine if I just restructured my body and became a child!!"

"……Jibril, I take it back, about forgiving you…… sink in the, bathtub…… and go count, your sins……!"

A loud sound of water echoed at Shiro's "command".

Jibril, who fell from above the screen into the bathtub like a cannonball was——

——Gobobobebababababa!

[Ahaaa~❤ I'm being kicked by the Master——it gives me shivers!]

"……Jibril. Just where are you heading to……"

Making bubbles flashily——did she bother to use magic for that?

As Jibril pryed the information directly from their brains, Sora let out a tired sigh.

——A game where people betray, deceive and steal each other's lives.

While the peaceful conversation far too unbecoming of it echoed——he just said, "Hah~ it brings me back to life…… the Elves onsen have magic in it, both beauty and fatigue——"

Maybe only Steph decided to give up on thinking.

Since her lengthy monologue of *it's a nice bath to run away from reality~* continued——

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——Having suddenly opened his eyes, Sora looked around.

Seems like I was more tired than I thought, he scratched his head.

After the bath, he redistributed the dice with Steph and Shiro——he didn't remember anything after that.

It's only natural for a person to get so tired after staying in a extreme situation for so long, so his memories flew away.

But Shiro——the one who cornered him, and that was the biggest cause of his exhaustion, was——

"……Uu…… the muscles are…… don't, come…… Nii, help, me……"

She was within Sora's arms as if was something natural ——no, simply obvious.

It seems like she's fighting with the incurable wound even within her dreams.

……It's too cruel. Is this violence something that can be allowed?

As Sora petted Shiro's head, and pondered about complaining to Tet and telling him to do his job already ——

"Oh? I'm very sorry Master, but did I wake you up?"

——*Let's see.*

"I presume that, after picking up Shiro who came out from the bath and feel asleep, I brought her to this room where I also collapsed exhausted at the bed, and then woke up due to the mutterings about muscles wriggling——that's about it, so?"

"I'm thankful for the explanatory tone, Master."

"Not that, it's about you. I understand the geezer, but——what are you doing here, Jibril?"

While being absent-mindedly illuminated faintly by the shine of the two dice on her chest and the light of the spirits,

Jibril was sitting on a chair while writing in a book as if it was also something natural.

It seems that Ino came to "question" Sora, but what about Jibril——?

"Nothing much…… Master slept without putting on a blanket so I thought it'd be a problem if youcaught a cold ——"

Jibril answered Sora's question with a gentle smile.

"It's good that you two could sleep, since I had considered lying naked together to warm——"

"Damn it all! Why——why was I sleeping all carefree ——!?"

If it was all dark, and with Shiro sleeping, then——!

I could've l-legally enjoyed touching many kinds of things and yet——!!

Why I am always like this in the critical times——as Sora held his head and trembled ashamed——

"……I came to see the Masters faces…… that's all."

She said, literally with a shadow in her smile illuminated only by the dim light,

As Jibril quietly told him so, Sora had an uncomfortable feeling and faced her again with his gaze, but.

Jibril kept on without stopping the brush that was writing in the book——a diary——

She simply responded with a sudden question that, like always, had no context.

"What does the Master think about…… 'Reincarnation'?"

"……? Even if you ask me that, is there even a cycle of transmigration in this world? ……So now it's anything goes, huh."

——Reincarnation, cycle of transmigration.

Although its existence hadn't been proved, there are many who believe in it even in the previous world.

So even if she asked him about his thoughts on such common sense——

"Ah, no. There isn't."

——*So there isn't,* Sora directed his gaze with his eyes half-open at her as she parried the question.

But Jibril, still not stopping the brush, continued indifferently——

"……The [soul] that loses its [vessel] melts in the Spiritual Circuit and disappears."

She indifferently——spoke about this world’s [death].

“……Just like how [water] can’t accumulate in a broken [cup], a soul water that lost its body cup will stain the ground and melt in air, returning to the planet…… This world has no cycle of transmigration——*but.*”

And so, Jibril stopped the brush. Then she turned to Sora with a meek look in her face and continued.

——*Although it’s a possibility that’s infinitely equivalent to zero.*

——*Although it’s the same irrational argument as saying a monkey will be able to write a novel if he kept typing endlessly.*

“For someone possessing ‘exactly the same soul’ to *appear once again*——theoretically, it’s possible.”

——When was it exactly that the existence of the [soul] was asserted as common sense?

At the time, Sora had vaguely understood it as “something like DNA”, but——

“……Basically, it’s *that*? The story about how it’s possible for someone with the same genes a clone be born by chance?”

So if the soul or whatever, holding even more information than the genes, were to appear in a completely equal state, then.

*I see, maybe you could possibly call that **a way of reincarnation.***

“……Master, this is just a supposition but——if ‘Shiro-sama was someone’s reincarnation’ then what would you thin——”

"I wouldn't think anything, it doesn't matter and I'm not interested, either."

Jibril asked meekly but——Sora answered immediately.

"*Shiro is just Shiro*. She isn't anyone of the past, and even if she's someone of the future, it won't be Shiro."

Taking a billion steps back, even if
such reincarnationclone were to appear,

It would be just "an unknown someone" with Shiro's appearance.

"……Then let's suppose even more, but…… what if, something was to happen to Shiro-sama——"

……That's a supposition beyond unimaginable.

If you want to make me cry then just say so, as Sora grumbled in his heart.

"And the 'reincarnation' with the exact same soul were to rely on Master, what would you think?"

——*Until where it would be oneself and by which means it would be a stranger.*

As he got asked such a philosophical question——Sora who wasn't blessed with a noble brain.

"HAHAHA, the premises won't hold with that, you know."

"……Why is that?"

"It's because 'it's someone else'! Regardless of how I think——*before anything else, it won't become attached to me and won't rely on me*, you see!"

——*A Shiro, who becomes attached to him, and walks alongside him*——he wondered.

Compared to someone with exactly the same genes as her appearing naturally——the probabilities of there having someone like that are far lower, right?

Saying so, tears shined in the corners of his eyes——but maybe it wasn’t a satisfying answer.

Jibril silently lowered her face——at that moment, quietly.

“……Nii…… that’s, wrong……”

“——Hey little sister, since when were you awake?”

“……Since, the moment…… the *word*…… [lying naked together] …… came out……”

glare and took the place of Sora, who drew back after being overpowered by the red eyes in the gloomy darkness.

Shiro who faced Jibril——said with the same small, whisper-like voice she always used.

“……Shiro, don’t understand…… what Jibril…… wants, to ask……”

It seems as if Sora and even Jibril, herself, didn’t seem to understand.

But Shiro——with the awareness of being disinterested in people’s subtleties——though, exactly because of that.

*I don’t know what you’re seeking but——**I don’t give a damn***, she said plainly.

“……Shiro, *won’t acknowledge*…… something like, a reincarnation……”

Both probabilities and suppositions should just screw themselves, she said with a whisper-like voice——but with a tone that wouldn’t approve disagreement.

“……If it’s, Shiro’s, ‘reincarnation$_{\text{clone}}$’ then…… it will, go once again, to Nii’s, side.”

————.

"……No matter how many times, I reincarnate…… I'll search for Nii, as many times as necessary…… I'll go, to his side."

As she said so with the red eyes looking over to him, Sora asked himself.

"……Nii, too…… surely, won't…… reject…… that……"

The figure looking up to him with this white hair, this faint voice, and with these red eyes.

——It's another person. It's not Shiro——would he be able to push her away like that?

"……But, having Shiro's, appearance…… Shiro's, voice…… dressing like, Shiro……"

——*Then the story is simple*, and Shiro, just like a child sulking and whining,

"……Someone who, isn't Shiro…… being stroked by Nii, and laughing…… happily……"

——With watery eyes, she concluded.

"…………*I definitely, won't acknowledge*…… something like that……"

I see, it's a simple story, Sora gave a wry smile in the middle of the silence.

Just think about it backwards——someone with my appearance, someone who isn't me is stroking Shiro.

It doesn't matter what Sora, Shiro or the others would think of that.

What do you think about it——it can end with just that.

——Maybe this time the answer had been satisfying.

Jibril cast down her eyes, closed the book she had once again ran the brush through and stood up——

“I am very sorry for intruding during your rest. It’s about time for me to leave so please take your time and relax.”

“……By the way. In the end, you haven’t really answered what you came here for, have you?”

While she stroked happily the two dice on her chest, Sora asked with his eyes half-open towards her back as she stood to leave——but.

“I came to see Masters’ faces…… it was really, just that ♪”

[Though there was a greater harvest than that], Jibril laughed as if jesting,

“Lastly…… a [report] and a [confirmation]——one of each.”

Starting from the report, Jibril gave a somewhat complicated smile.

“I was correct to come here——it was an extremely happy time.”

And now onto the confirmation, still with a meaningful smile, but resolutely——

“……This game——*it’s alright if I win it,* isn’t it?”

This game is a game where the players betray and deceive each other.

Regardless of what each one thinks behind the scenes, there’s just one single thing that won’t waver.

——*Only one of them* will be able to [win]ascend——

Sora had said——everyone made it so that they would be the ones to win.

Then IJibril, too——***receiving the Masters' permission,*** *must've done that*——she confirmed with her eyes——

“Obviously. Likewise, obviously——we won't be letting you win.”

“……Jibril, really…… will, get…… punished, so……”

As the two of them answered challenging, she bowed deeply——

“……Forgive me, but this time alone I'll have you let me win this. *No matter what methods I have to use*.”

Saying so, Jibril turned on her heels and flapped her wings, flying through the window to the night sky.

She disappeared suddenly like when she appeared and, gazing at the place she was standing, Shiro suddenly asked.

“……Nii, what about, the dice……you handed out, to Jibril……?”

“Huh? But, Jibril had two dice, you know? I had her re——”

——turn, but Sora, who has about to say that, noticed startled and stopped his words.

What about such memory? ——There's nothing.

On Sora and Shiro's chests, there were nine dice each——and if there's one with Steph, who must be sleeping in another room, then——

“~Jibrill~lll!! What do you think you're doing, performing such a *stingy cheat* right after giving outsuch a exaggerated proclamation of war!?”

——As he shouted, blaming the one who disguised the number of dice with magic and nicely “borrowed and ran away” with eight dice,

“……Nii…… super, idiot…… super, dumb……”

But that was originally for a stupid reason——it was a transference he did for the sake of running from Shiro.

As the voice said that it was entirely Sora’s fault, there were no allies nor room for him to disagree.

Sora simply went back to holding his knees——……

Chapter 3 — Incorrect Persuasion(How)

——204th Square——Fifth move——Number of dice remaining, three.

Hatsuse Ino looked down to his own hands that had rejuvenated to how it was before his thirty years old.

The square was being illuminated by the light of the red moon, as if it had been tailored—— he smiled bitterly at that sense of nostalgia.

That's right……when he first met her, it had been more or less at this time of the year, in a night like this.

It had been during the time when the many islands that didn't even had yet the name of Eastern Union were swept away—— by that storm(her)…….

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

"Isn't it a nice moonlit night, "Hatsuse"……since this night feels so good, won't you try playing with me?"

More than half a century in the past, under the night illuminated by the red moon.

There was a petite, bright red fox—— but with two powerful tails dyeing the night red, even more violently than the moonlight.

The [storm](girl) that had trampled upon the East stood in front of Ino, and called his family name with a voice that was like a bell.

The rumors about the storm(her) had reached even his ears, who was just the chief of one island at the time.

The last one of the persecuted golden foxes—— a girl with [Blood Devastation].

She rose up from the very bottom of the island that had persecuted herself, and finally subdued it——

With overwhelming five senses, thought speed and trickery, she jumped out of Kannagari and bore her fangs towards all islands where the Werebeasts lived and to all tribes. She cut off the ocean, severed the trade(lifeline), brought forth self-destruction through internal collapse, eliminated all other options aside from complying to the game—— and became the "storm" that had swallowed the East, bringing them down and ruling without pardon nor concession.

Facing that storm, Ino had no right to reject the game.

"……I thought that we had the same aspirations of concern about the current situation, but……it seems it was a terrible miscalculation, huh."

Sighing just once, he firmly stepped in the ground.

——At first, Ino had expectations for the storm(rumors). He had hopes for it. He longed for it.

Someone finally appeared to put an end to the swamp of futility that is the antagonism between fellow Werebeasts.

——But.

The ground he stepped upon broke and soared up, and the number of reds dyeing the night increased to two.

Making the blood boil, the red beasts gnawed and broke down the shackles of the physics—— and one from the opposing two said.

“——You surely didn’t think that [Blood Devastation](power) was an exclusivity of yours—— not to mention,”

What lied ahead——of bringing down the Werebeasts, ruling and making them obey with just this much(power).

“I will not overlook it as the entire race gets destroyed by “an even stronger being”, right——!!”

——*It wasn’t something that someone had aimed for, it was just a disgusting “hindsight”……but.*

Although it was hard to admit, the race had divided itself in tribes and did nothing but internal strife all day—— that too is a [standard].

If the Werebeasts were to be unified through power—— and someone carelessly became the [Sole Representative],

——In the moment they face an even greater power, *the Werebeast race itself will be crushed in the very first move.*

This miserable [standard](theory).

The [disaster](theory) where the other races rule over one part of the Werebeasts through games and enslaves them.

The [vulgarity](theory) of even being pleased with it: *Because it's another tribe. It's someone else's problem.*

In order to unify the race and overturn the [standard](theory), power isn't enough—— it's necessary *more than that.*

He wanted to tell that to the "storm" which he had expected, hoped and longed for, but then got disappointed at, and yet——

"Kuhahaha, how funny of you to say that when you're but a lower body that parted with your tribe since you got irritated for *not being able to be surrounded by beauties*!!"

……The storm laughed.

"————Dear me, what could you be talking about?"

"It's fine, it's fine……you say that "you can't do the woman you want to do" and oppose the tribe, then make a harem with the beauties you had gathered while saying that you desire to abolish the discrimination between the tribes —— isn't your motivation so refreshing, or better yet, pure?"

——*Hmm, so everything has already been seen though.*

"Then I'll speak frankly——If you dare lay your hands on my women then I'll tear off your throat, you shitty brat."

She laughed out loudly at Ino, who stopped minding the appearances.

The beautiful storm laughed bewitchingly and brushed it off.

"Then win against me. If you do so, then never again shall I lay my hands on your *women*, along with the island."

But in exchange,—— the storm(girl) said,

"If you lose then become my subordinate. Of course, you have no right to decline so do bear with it, alright♪"

——And then, Ino felt ashamed of his own shallowness.

With ***just this much power***—— *the violent five senses and thought speed brought forth by Blood Devastation(power),*

There's no way that a [conspiracy](storm) that did swallow up this many islands would ever happen.

In a game between fellow Blood Devastation individuals, the storm(girl) beat him up like one playing with a child——

"The [standard] known as *it's better for the Werebeasts to quarrel between* *themselves*——I'll *firstly* destroy that."

The red who had released the Blood Devastation and then named herself as [Miko] to Ino, who became her subordinate——

"Everything that I had subdued temporarily——will now be refunded using autonomy as a bait, and so I'll build the "Tribal Union"."

——Was a golden fox girl that surely overshadowed any treasure.

She spoke about the future that Ino had expected, hoped and longed for.

"The unified government of the Werebeasts—— the establishment of the [Eastern Union]……this will be the first [standard breaker]."

While he gasped at the foresight of the storm that had swallowed up everything——

"……But that will invite the [standard breaker breaker][39], you know."

Declaring the merging of the Werebeasts, the unification and even the resistance of the other races as "firstly",

"The [standard] I seek should exist beyond the eternity of breaking it repeatedly for countless times."

With eyes that looked over the far, far away distant horizon——

"——The [stardard] where no one is a piece to be controlled by someone else, *where no one needs to be sacrificed*."

Towards the one who challenged the endless dream—— and even the new end beyond it,

Towards the one who challenged even what lied beyond the end—— of the unending dream,

Ino knelled down, and solemnly declared that he would offer up his remaining life for her.

"If you promise to *allow polygamy* when developing the laws, then I shall help you with my entire being on the line."

"Kuhahaha! As expected of the man who seduces beautiful girls without bearing in mind their tribe or position!"

Miko laughed loudly, and jokingly spoke towards Ino, who was kneeling with a serious face.

"I'm relieved. If you were an indiscriminate that attacked even those who aren't beautiful, then I would have to worry about my chastity too."

"Although I may be being rude—— may I ask of you to withdraw this statement just now?"

"……Hou?"

"A beauty must not undervalue herself."

"……………………It really seems like you'd be popular."

"I'm bragging, but *yes*. Additionally, I'll correct this too, but I also pride myself in that *I certainly do bear in mind their positions*."

Towards the precious girl—— that looked up so high that the moon too would be shamed by it,

Ino, who had resolved himself to offer his body for the end which she looked over for, spoke with a smile.

"I shall refrain myself from seducing you, until I become a man befitting of Miko-sama."

——From that day on, a turbulent half-century that seemed like many centuries started.

Just like Miko had declared, she had taken the many islands that reached up to four-digits as her opponent, with almost the same number of tribes, along with the enormous challenges that came under the pretext of discussion and negotiations—— and kept playing games without rest for things like the division of the law, economy and administrative rights.

Concurrently, she gathered experts and raised a National Research Plan while keeping a interim government.

She sought a method(game) with no room for interference with magic, and through the elements—— a method to oppose the other races.

She sought a method to oppose the other races——a method(game) without room for the interference with magic, and elementals.

Miko set her eyes into the "power" that flowed through Kannagari's Temple, the current [Shrine of the Priestess](Miyashiro).

At the time, Ino—— no, there was no one who knew the true identity of that power.

Thinking about it now……that must've been what the "power of the Old Deus" really was.

But Miko used that as "just a power", and sought a device to operate it on encryption.

Regardless of the identity of the power, it's meaningless if it's something which the other races can easily interfere with.

Like that, they made a program—— the first video game, that worked by turning that "power" on and off.

The representation of image and voice only became possible through the conversion of algorithm, twenty years later.

And so, when almost sixty years had passed since that day——……

"……It has been over half a century until here……isn't that so, Hatsuse Ino ——"

——Until half a century ago, who could have imagined that the city would develop this brilliantly and dazzlingly.

The completed Werebeast's Unified Country [Eastern Union]——in the capital, Kannagari.

The golden fox laying in the handrail in the Shrine of the Priestess's garden —— she sipped a sake, then suddenly spoke out.

"……I wonder—— *just where did I make a mistake……*"

——Ino did not understand the meaning of those words.

The [standard](theory) where the Werebeasts quarreled was completely broken.

The method(game) to oppose the other races had reached the Full-Dive model, and it had even managed to repel the Elves.

"Excuse my words, but Miko-sama accomplished the [standard breaker], something that no Werebeast could——"

"And like that, for over half a century——I'm still at this standard(place)……"

Interrupting Ino and laughing self-deprecatingly, Miko spoke with her eyes.

Seeking what lies in the end of the standard that kept being broken eternally, she kept running without even looking aside.

……The government won't move on lip service.

In order to ease the tribal discrimination, she took on the policy of looking down upon the other races.

The number of times she had discarded the minority for the sake of the majority were limitless, and the number of lives she stole indirectly was also immeasurable.

——These were accomplished by shaving away her lifespan of two hundred years down to the remaining few dozen years, and yet——although too lately,

"……The standard of [no sacrifices] that I sought, do not exist *ahead of this……*"

She noticed that she was simply changing the sacrifices, and nothing else.

"I was mistaken……*that cheat*——the very first move was a mistake."

——Ino really couldn't understand the meaning of those words.

"Right, but……I don't know……*what I should have done……*"

While playing with the Werebeast's piece—— a pawn made of light, Miko laughed as if in self-derision.

"That's why—— this is [the end] of my dream."

I no longer have the right to see the dream of that day, Miko flipped the piece.

But, the man who settled besides her for more than half a century——

"……You're saying things you don't really mean. It lacks persuasiveness when you speak with a face like that, you know."

"……Right, then——then let's choose the words, just like *a sore loser*."

——Her expression, biting the corner of her mouth and trying to smile forcefully,

That expression of not having accepted it at all, definitely, and not in the slightest,

It was the face of a gamer saying—— *there's no way I can completely give up on it.*

"What should I have done—— how about postponing the match, until I find the answer for that?"

——*That smile, which he saw for the first time, wasn't crying..*

She wasn't trembling. She stood firmly and aloof, like always.

——*That's right, Ino…….*

——*Left it at that………..*

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

"……So you came……"

At their presence, Ino closed his eyes that saw the past.

He slowly—— opened his eyes that saw the present.

——204th square.

The place where Ino had nestled indulging in reverie—— was fifty-two squares away from the square where he had soaked in a bath with Sora and the others.

Sora had let slip out in the bath "where the next stopping square was", so Ino received the people he awaited quietly.

"——Oh? I guess this is…… *I have made you wait*, right, Gramps?"

"……Uuh……I didn't, want……to see, you ever again……geezer……"

"I've had enough, isn't there an [abstention] in this game?! Will the suffering end if you die!?"

Ino let out a small smile at the three that had appeared loudly, unwillingly and aloofly.

"Yes, you sure made me wait……you really took you time, didn't you?"

"Don't ask for the impossible……it's 520km you know. The Harley also runs out of fuel, thinking about it normally……"

Since it would happen, I wish I had put a [Fuel Trailer] too, he let out.

——Maybe something had happened in the middle of the way, because Sora was gasping for breath while armed with a straw hat and a bamboo spear,

Shiro, whose body was trembling as if in fear of a nightmare——also had bamboo spear, which was pointed at Ino, And Steph, who was clad in rags, was lying flat in the ground whining——towards these three,

——The written text was read up.

——[Tear your cock[40] into pieces for the sake of the world.]

That's right——letting out an smirk at *Ino's own task*, Sora said.

"……Hmm, so this is how it is, if the three of us "randomly tear *one thing***[41]** into pieces", three dice will be stolen from you and you'll clearly reach the number zero and the "Game Over"——did you wait just to see us off, Gramps?"

"——Wha……!?"

204th square——Ino, when passing through the square that Sora and the others would stop at, he saw the task, and so he intended on "ambushing" them there.

Putting Steph who was at a loss of words aside, Sora questioned him with an amazed expression.

But——*it's only natural for him to be amazed*, the self-deprecating smile he displayed told so.

There's no specified time. Rather, there wasn't even an specific mention about [what] was it.

It was a dumb, foolish task, just like the other [tasks] Ino wrote.

——Even if he had lost himself after finding out that Miko died and Sora was the culprit, there was no room for excuse.

As such, he couldn't make any excuse, so,

"It's really shameful of me. I should have calmly contemplated for a certain and precise way to make Sora-dono die."

"Don't go reflecting about that part! I'm telling you to stop with the killing remarks, I'll cry you know!?"

Even though he wanted to turn it into an *intimidation*, Sora barked with teary eyes.

——That's right, it's a [task] that doesn't even specify who and what.

————But it's a [task] that can be accomplished, therefore *it's not invalid*.

——————It's a complete meaningless [task], *under normal circumstances*.

"Sora-dono……no. Maybe it would be better if I asked Shiro-dono?"

Slow~ly lowering his center of gravity, he bared his fangs and claws.

"——Shiro-dono remembers every single word of the [Task]'s rules, don't you——?"

Towards Ino——who said that in what anyone could clearly see it as a *battle stance*,

Shiro, who got questioned, flinched her eyebrows dubiously——but, that too lasted only an instant.

"————————!?"

Opening the rucksack, her eyes opened wide, and her white face turned even paler.

07: The Dice Holder who's stopped on the square will be forced to follow any instructions the【Task】holds.

——The [Tasks] in this game have a coercive force.

But——that's *clearly violating* the [Ten Oaths].

To force an action isn't anything but the infringement of the free will(rights).

And yet——since the coercive power works, then it means that all members agreed on it.

That's exactly why it was possible to steal each other's lives——even if indirectly.

That's exactly why, if it's written [commit suicide *immediately*]——if the time got specified——they will die.

They asked if they could kill, and the answer was sure——there was such consent, therefore——

"It's already over. These foolish tasks too……since *I am here*——"

——In a instant, the ground shattered and the air was repelled.

The dust that got blew up with the blast obstructed Sora's view——

The next time he opened it, there was——

"——It's also possible for me to "tear Sora-dono(one thing) into pieces", you see……"

The appearance of slaughter itself ——a bright red beast clad in spray of blood, baring its fangs.

Ino laughed at Shiro, who had instantaneously noticed it and was rummaging through the rucksack——and spoke.

"——Let me give you a handicap."

If they immediately cut into pieces a different [one thing(something)]——in other words, if they [accomplish the task], *Then Ino's killing act will stop.*

——But.

"Between Sora-dono, you all……tearing [one thing](something) into pieces, and ——"

"Me counting up to five, and tearing [Sora-dono] into pieces——which one is faster?"

——Five.

"Eh~, excuse-me~……just what, does this means?"

"……Hurry, up……if we don't tear, something into pieces……Nii will be killed……!"

With these words, maybe even the dumbfounded Steph understood at least the situation.

Just like Shiro, she started rummaging the rucksack——but then she shouted a question, as if screaming.

"——Wai-, why——why is Ino-san going to kill Sora!?"

"Why you ask, he has been writing [die] in the tasks from the very beginning, and he has so much motivation to really do it that I even want him to spare me from that……I don't remember being liked, but I wonder if I did do anything to be hated this much?"

"You have been doing too much of it, haven't you!? And it's not that! Because——"

"——Because? Because what?"

————Four.

"*For Gramps,* he'll be the one who will die if we accomplish the task, you know? It's the same"

"Rather, why are you waving it off so calmly!!"

Putting aside those two, who had taken out the foodstuff they borrowed from the inn, and were desperately trying to tear it off.

Just a single one of them, only Sora remained indifferently as he looked at Ino while sighing, as if simply being tired.

"……Because it's useless. And besides, we won't make it in time either way."

————Three.

——Even though he's twisting down the physics with [Blood Devastation], the time until he counted five seemed to be many hours.

While Sora and the others even seemed to be stationary as they rummaged through the rucksack,

Ino simply saw, in the gaze of the man that calmly looked at him——the continuation of his memories…….

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——That was an event that even seemed to have happened just yesterday.

Ino had returned alive from Oceando——from the trap prepared by the Seirens and the Dhampirs.

In the garden of the Shrine of the Priestess, the golden fox that had laid back in the handrails and was sipping sake just like *that day*——spoke.

"Hatsuse Ino. To be honest, I had determined that you should be abandoned."

——I knew.

Ino knew Miko very well, whom he had been spending his time together for more than half a century.

She was someone that would cut off the minority without hesitation, if that was for the sake of the majority……for the sake of the Werebeasts.

She was someone whose decisiveness would even cause awe, and with her ability to execute things she had established the Eastern Union——and yet was unable to completely become ruthless.

She pilled up anguish and agony with her decisions, but even so she continued looking far away without clinging to it and breaking down——but.

That day——she had let out that she was a "sore loser" who had made a mistake somewhere.

Ever since that day, which she said she had seen the end of her unending dream——

"The man who kept walking his own path without abandoning you, whom even I had abandoned——do you feel like trying to believe in him?"

Being asked so, Ino thought——*[that's out of question]*——.

Ino didn't understand that man, *but there was something he could say about him.*

It was that, at the very least——*he's someone you definitely shouldn't trust* ——but.

"——If that allows you to see that dream once again."

Ino hung his head……and answered so.

——*That day*, ever since the day she endured her regretful tears and still refused to break down,

The rigid smile——from saying that the match would be postponed, and continued to look away from her dream,

——It wasn't there anymore.

That was because the smile(girl) from the day he first met her, that overshadowed any treasure as she looked over the end of the endless, was there.

The girl that had postponed the match until she found the answer——did she find it?

Did she see in them——in Sora and the others……an answer(something) worth of seeing that dream once again?

Ino knew Miko very well, whom he spent time together for more than half a century.

——He was convinced……he knew…………

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——Zero.

"——Well then, *everyone*……it's goodbye."

He bid farewell to everyone——who were desperately trying to tear the baggage even now.

He ignored Steph and Shiro, who was about to open their mouth to raise a scream——and Ino's legs,

"……More importantly, Gramps, you see……my bad, but that's use ————————"

Kicked the ground——and in that moment.

Sora's voice was interrupted, the space distorted and the time burst.

That [Blood Devastation] violently and forcefully twisted the world's reasoning.

He ran overwriting 100m into 0m, and 0 second into 100 seconds.

Inside the stationary world where Sora, Shiro and Steph had three different kinds of expressions,

He took flight in the boundary that only Ino——only the Blood Devastation individuals were allowed in.

One step, in advance.

One step, closer.

One move, extend the hand.

The power that could turn the Immanity body(Sora) into a splash with just that much.

The claws that extended and teared soundlessly, not letting even the air sense it——

"————————less……you should choose *the game's genre* carefully."

——It stopped right in the tip of Sora's noise, who spoke so.

It immediately stopped——due to the unquestionable [Oath](Power) that won over any inertia(reason) and Blood Devastation(irrationality).

Some moments late——as if it had just remembered that the time was something that flowed,

While the explosion and blast of the shock wave born from Ino's action blew violently——

"To do a "word-pick(bluff) battle" against me——that's just too much of a hurdle for you."

——Towards Sora who, on top of having noticed, was laughing with his voice trembling as he tried his utmost to act tough,

Ino gave back a little laugh, lowered his hand——and released the Blood Devastation.

"No specification equals *you can do anything*——you know that such reasoning wont work."

……That's right, their agreement about giving and taking lives was about the [Tasks](rule) with the coercive power——

"That's simply *not putting anything in the betting plate*——that's all……isn't that so?"

"……Hm, so you found it out. Maybe it was too much of a challenge to try doing a comparison of wisdom with a demon?"

Ignoring the frozen Shiro and Steph, Ino smiled at Sora, who was leisurely tearing a foodstuff.

——Ino couldn't use this task to kill Sora.

If Ino himself knew that——the true intention of that action was——

"…………Ah……"

Shiro, who noticed too late——quietly raised her voice at "the thing inside her hands",

"——Eh, th-, then Ino-san, you didn't plan on killing Sora……is that so?"

"Stephanie-dono……I wish that you wouldn't misjudge me so much."

But, Ino answered strongly to the single one who hadn't noticed it.

"——It's this Hatsuse Ino's mettle to feel like killing Sora-dono at any, every and all times, you see!?"

"Hey geezer!! Apologize to my pants that got a little wet even though I knew it was a bluff!!"

"Eh……eh? Huh, but——"

If he knew he couldn't kill him, then why did he bluff.

Tilting her head, Steph's gaze questioned him, so Ino, with a nice smile——with half of it being his true feelings, and the other half a lie,

"If I can't kill him——then there won't be any harm if I just do a little bit of "harassment", is there?"

——*Tehe pero*[42]……

He said so with an imitative sound that was far too incongruous for that muscular body.

"……Gramps, you don't need "that attribute", alright……"

"Y-, yes……?"

Steph had almost fainted due to exhaustion——but, Sora's groaning voice held her still.

"If the three of us clear the task, you'll lose all of your dices——"

That's why, and taking a glance at Steph and "what was in her hands", Sora said.

"……You estimated that at the very least one person *would refuse that*, so you set up that act."

"…………!!!"

——That's right, it had been the same as Shiro.

It was what she had obtained——in exchange for the "foodstuff that was torn into pieces".

——Steph held her breath at the single dice that had increased around her chest.

"In other words, your objective was to entrust your dice to us, and to let us go on ahead——"

Sora, who was still breaching the foodstuff comfortably, said ironically——

"Who would benefit from an attribute like a *tsundere macho*……there's no demand for that and it's creepy, so let's stop with that, alright?"

…………

……………………suddenly.

Ino murmured self-deprecatingly, genuinely fed up.

“So you saw through everything, huh——that part of you really get in my nerves, you shitty monkey.”

——He spent more than half a century alongside Miko.

But Ino——didn’t know anything, not a single thing.

What did “the girl(she)” looked at.

What did “Miko(she)” worried about.

What did “that day’s expression(she)” lamented for being mistaken, and that now her dream may have been broken——not a single thing.

Ino didn’t even knew nor did he notice the existence of the Old Deus behind her.

——In contrast, this man who seemed to see through everything and his little sister knew about it.

Let alone half a century……*before even meeting her for the first time*——he already knew far more than Ino.

What did Miko looked at, what mistake did she commit, what did she shed tears about——and.

——What had it been——that had made her let out an smile and see that dream once again…….

Just a little bit of harassment——half of it had been true. Ino was stirred up by an immature envy.

And now, it was a childish obstinacy that made Ino open his mouth.

——*I see, certainly I know almost nothing about Miko.*

But, there are also things that I do know, he said as if making a point.

“If you’re going to set something up then you’ll prepare something critical. You’ll set it up in a way that you’ll win no matter how things turn out, wasn’t that right?”

Sora would do that.

——Anyone would do that.

——If even Ino must’ve done that, then——

“……It’s obvious that *Miko-sama also did that*……isn’t that so.”

——*Correct*, Sora gave a wry smile as if saying so, and finally teared apart the grass at hand.

While only Steph gasped puzzled, Ino laughed it up as something natural if you only gave it some thought.

——If it's a game that started with everyone's agreement, using Miko's life as the [starting chip],

Then it's obvious that……among that "everyone" who agreed on it——*Miko was also included*…….

And on top of that, since Miko had asked [will you try to believe in Sora?], then her intention was——

"……Miko-sama must have *believed*. That if it was Sora-dono and Shiro-dono then you would definitely do it, more skillfully than anyone——

——With the one thing(grass) that Sora had teared as the last——Ino, after the task was deemed to be complete by the three of them,

He lost the three remaining dice, and while he was being swallowed by a whirl of light, he spoke.

"——She must have *believed that you would betray everyone, deceive them and win*——with a method that only someone——with a dirty, repulsive, twisted and rebellious failure of a personality who's also shameful and regrettable, both mentally and facially——could think of."

"That was one word……no, seven words too much, geezer."

"…………Nii……i-is Shiro……a facially, shameful and regrettable……child……?"

"Ahh ahh Shiro! That's wrong, he's talking about Onii-chan!"

——Sora gave a follow up for Shiro, who got lumped together but didn't have any objection to anything other than the face.

Ino smiled bitterly, and as he disappeared……he spoke out his own answer to Sora.

"And *on top of that*——she must have made a trap to set you all up, isn't that right?"

A game where the players betrays(kills) each other, that couldn't be established without everyone's consent.

The reason behind the agreement for starting it with Miko's life as compensation, which was something Ino would never consent——

"If Sora-dono and the others made preparations for themselves to win……if you do win——"

The reason that took him quite some time to notice——he dared to say it, provocatively.

"Then that will be because I got confident that *that's what will become Miko-sama's victory*……and nothing else."

——One, two years were erased, and his body went regressing.

It was something which he had experienced many times, but this time it would continue without limit until he reached the *age of zero——disappeared.*

——What would happen once the dice number became zero?

Every one would see that [answer] before them for the first time.

Amid then, Steph was covering her mouth, and was shedding tears with confused emotions, like sympathy and fear.

“——Win. I won’t acknowledge any other outcome——besides the one that Miko-sama desired so much that she even exchanged her life for it.”

Don’t get conceited——Ino *ordered* them, as if spiting it out.

For the sake of Miko-sama’s victory, I’ll simply help out with your victory, and I’ll end here.

Ino turned to Sora and Shiro, and declared so.

——But.

“You didn’t even need to say that. Stay well, gramps——no, young man?”

“*……Hasta la vista(Let us meet again), baby(boy)~*[43]……although reluctantly……*good night……*”

——Although it was something Ino himself wished for,

Those two kept reacting frivolously towards the one they drove to death, without a single change in their expression.

Even Steph found it eerie and got angry at it. And Ino——

“Since these are my last moments……could I have you answer just one thing?”

“……Last moments, huh……*then* it’ll depend on the question, I guess?”

——Ino would disappear in only a few seconds, so he simply questioned, aimlessly.

“……Why is it——that it couldn’t be me……”

Even now that he headed to his death, he still didn’t understand what was it that Miko had seen in them.

“……Why were you guys……the ones to give Miko-sama the answer(smile)……”

The thing she had seen not on him, but on them, that had regained her smile.

Just what did she see in these monsters(two), who don’t bat a single eyelid when facing someone else’s death.

Throwing away the envy and regret, Ino sought the *answer* as if pleading——

"……You know, gramps. The basics to win a game, it's hidden purpose, it's ——"

Sora and Shiro answered——just with a complicated, indescribable expression.

"To thoroughly do what your opponent doesn't want you to do, and to not do a single thing that your opponent want you to do."

"……A twisted, personality……stands, out……you know……"

That's why——making his complicated smile even more deeper——

"As a person of character, you're first rate——but *as a gamer you're super third rate,* you see."

——Until the very last moments, he has a *nice personality.*

"……Maybe I should take at least your consideration……"

——To not do what they want, and to do what they don't want to be done.

As a gamer, those two [merely didn't feel like giving the answer].

"I'll be seeing you two cry after getting screwed by Miko-sama's side, in that world."

I see, while giving an smile that even seemed refreshingly after making a full bounce back——

"Consideration? *I wonder what are you talking about.* By the way——can I also say one thing during these last moments or whatsoever?"

——Amid his fading consciousness, Ino certainly saw it.

It was just like the one he knew. It was the same one as always. That superb one.

That one that makes anyone want to see it back with a punch——that's right,

"This game. Even though this is a game where you steal each other's dice ——their age,"

——Sora spoke, with the very same smile as he remembered——

"……Why is it that the *memories don't decrease,* I wonder?"

——.

————.

"See you~ then~, oh, about the impressions of going to the "long-awaited that world" or something——"

"……Let us, hear……about it later, ok……♪"

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——Being wound up by the light, he kept regressing without limit.

In this game where their Mass Existence's Time——their body age was split into dice,

What the dice number [zero] defined——was the denial of the fact they existed.

He became a young man, then an infant, a fetus, a cell——and then.

——In the place where the one who was called [Hatsuse Ino] was supposed to be standing,

All that had remained was the void that meant "no one like that existed"——

"This……it's an image that can easily become a trauma, right……"

"……Shiro……don't like this……I, remembered……I'll probably, see dreams of it again……"

They recalled that both of them once saw a documentary program about the birth of the lifeforms.

Sora and Shiro thought so dishearteningly at the spectacle that unfolded before their eyes.

——*Even for an education program, I think the "reversed growth of a fetus" is a bit too much…….*

"…………You all……just how……can you remain so composed?"

The one who squeezed that out was Steph, who leaked out a sob.

"Are you really weird somewhere in the head!? We killed Ino-san, you know——!?"

"Eh~, it's alright if you do it just once in a while, but I wish that you'd also remember about the Sora-san that he seriously tried to kill~"

——Steph said so being driven by a sense of guilty, since she had played a part in it——even though she had been induced to do so.

But she stepped back feeling even fear towards Sora, who responded to it like a joke, and completely aloof.

She had an expression that was like, right, as if she was indeed looking at a serial killer——but.

"……Remaining squares: 147, number consumed in one move: six……die's random number analysis, two more times……♪"

"There were many complications but we safely got Ino to drop out, and though we aren't that well of dice, well it's all going as the scheduled♪"

But Sora and Shiro were simply sorting out the situation, while playing around with the dice.

They also achieved their plan——that was to have Ino and *one more person to hurry up and leave the stage.*

With this, the conditions to win have been gathered——the two laughed thinly.

Ino, who had regained his coolness, had read it up to a good point.

——If you're going to prepare something then you'll prepare something critical. Sora too, anyone too——Miko too would do that.

Then——if he just had stepped in just one more step, he would have understood it all, and yet——

"——Well then! Shall we gather the dice once again and go [Traveling together]!?"

"……Oh~……"

And thus, they moved onto the problem that remained——correction. The problem that had followed them consistently——namely.

……Means of movement, which was what Sora and Shiro were making an effort to not think about it as they raised their fists.

"I refuse."

——But, they were told to wait.

"I completely refuse to travel together with people who kills someone and can still continue laughing!!!"

…….

…………Er……m?

"……Nii, you'd better……teach her, properly……"

"Eh——huh? It can't be——"

After being told so by Shiro, he finally understood the meaning of the gaze that was directed to him——

"You-, you didn't notice!? Even though the ground is so flooded with flags that you can't even see it!? Even though, in the case of a video game, it's about time to start complaining about the scenario, like [until when do you plan on dragging on that obvious foreshadowing?]!?"

"……Nii……just move, on……with it……"

And, after getting a complain from his little sister, Sora whispered quietly in Steph's ears who, at those words——

——Let out a scream that echoed as if telling the heavens and earth to listen to it.

"It's like Ino-san said, you two should die once for the sake of the world!!!"

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——Eastern Union - Capital Kannagari. In one of its corners, there's an agency that acts as a Naval Garrison Post and Surveillance Office.

It's a [military agency] that was founded during the ancient Great War, for the sake of dealing with calamities that came from the sea.

The war ended, so in the present, the location and the mechanisms of the organization also suffered great changes——but.

Even now, only it's name and duty did not change.

In other words——it was a [diplomatic agency] that dealt with whoever who comes from the sea——.

——Well then. In such present, there was a rumor that a *ghost* comes out in there.

Really, it's such a stupid story.

It's a clear fact that——"ghosts don't exist" in this world.

The life force fills the [vessel] with a [soul], and if by some reason——the vessel ends in a state where it's unable to fixate the soul, in other words due to damaging(disease), destruction(injury) or even lifespan——it's called [death].

For a soul to maintain its form without a vessel, it would be akin to the work of a Sanctuary Magic.

That kind of dead with a lingering affection, or the "so-called ghost" are just illusions, without exception.

But currently, in this Supervision Office, that rumor was being talked about with great seriousness.

According to them——*they heard a growl saying [furioussss] in an empty room.*

According to them——*they saw a most disgusting scene: a coarse mass of muscles going through a wall.*

According to them——*the thing that glowed dimly was something exceptionally scary……it was a fluorescent macho.*

——No, that wasn't a rumor anymore.

Right now, it certainly was right before a female officer's eyes.

In the empty reception room, a pile of meat was crouching on the floor in agony while raising an incomprehensible growl.

A half-transparent coarse mass of muscles that glowed dimly——ooohhh…… it's undoubtedly a fluorescent macho!

The female officer opened her trembling lips, with teary-eyes——

"……Ha——"

She called out in bravery, but it was——Ah, how to say——

"Are, you……Hatsuse, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs?"

"How furiousssssssssssssssssssss!!"

——How to say it……it was Hatsuse Ino.

A fluorescent macho——it was an horror that was so exceptionally creepy that everyone avoided looking directly at.

The female officer that had ascertained its true identity piled up more questions.

"It's the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Hatsuse's, spiritual body? E-excuse me for the rudeness, but you're not d-d-dead, are you?"

"Ugh, guhh……yes, yes……for good or for bad, that does seems to be the case!!!"

——That's right, Ino went to the "long-awaited that world"——no, he had returned from it.

Ino, who had accepted his death and spat out a cliched speech,

Woke up in the Shrine of the Priestess in the same aspect as Sora and Shiro must've expected——namely.

"——I'm still alive, aren't IIIIIIIIIIIII!!"

Shouting so, he fell flat on the ground while holding his head, and rolled around in anguish.

No——to be correct, he probably isn't alive.

Rather, going by the common sense, Ino was categorically dead——but then he recalled the rules.

01: Each of the seven players own [Mass Existence's Time] will be granted as ten [Dice], split into percentages.

Mass Existence's Time——that's right, it was the time the mass existed.

——*[Souls] without mass aren't included* there.

15. If all Players lose the entirety of their dice or if they become [Unable to Continue] through DEATH, the game will end.

16: In the case of becoming [Unable to Continue], the Old Deus in question will be granted the right to COLLECT EVERYTHING from all participants, except from the Leading Player.

——The loss of dice……if it becomes zero——*or* through death, it says.

Surely he would've noticed it if he had calmly thought about it: that if the [zero dice] equaled [death], Then there wouldn't be any need to separate it with the *or*, and more importantly, for starters——!!

"——There isn't written "death through the loss of dice" anywhere in the rules, righttttttt!! The one who said that you would die if you lose your dice ——*was that shitty monkey, wasn't itttttttt!!"*

I see, so I lost the dice that was my [Mass Existence's Time]——the *physical age*.

In result, my [body]——the [vessel] was annihilated, so only the appearance of the [soul] was left through.

Rationally, that was categorically [death], but through the irrationality called [rules]——

——His *life will be collected*, but that will only happen upon the [End of the game].

And so, Ino recalled back the expression and words that Sora and the others showed while he disappeared.

A complicated——inexplicable expression……that's right, *that*,

It was them holding back the laughter, while *looking at him with gentle eyes* ——he finally noticed, though too late.

——*[Even though this is a game where you steal each others age(life), why is it that the memories doesn't decrease, I wonder?]*

It was because the give and take of dice——was an exchange that was only related to the [vessel].

They had noticed itt. That even if you lose the dice in this game——

——*You won't die straight away*, that there was such loophole in the rules ——!

But——then.

"*Miko-sama isn't dead either*, righttttttttt!?"

——Even if he roared, now that things already happened, he was just a goofy who couldn't do anything.

Ah……now I understand, Ino thought back on having spat out some really cliched lines, thinking that it was his dying moments.

That shitty monkey——no, that gentle guy had ***answered*** *it in a roundabout way to not irritate him.*

The one who sought a [standard](theory) where no one needed to be sacrificed ——it was none other than that person, Miko.

Would she sacrifice herself?, he had gently told so to the fool(me), who didn't even think about that.

——*[That's because you're a goofy.]…….*

Ino was making good use of his spiritual body by slipping through the ground and holding his knees——but, suddenly.

——*So that's it, I'm stupid, a goofy, and I'm right in the middle of realizing that bitterly.*

*But——**what is this situation**——*, he looked up and thought so.

The tremendously huge Sugoroku board——created by the Old Deus.

I see, so the rules were explained in a way to thoroughly invite misunderstandings.

I see, so the game isn't about killing each other *just* by the steal of dice.

I see, so the life won't be collected until the end of the game, even if the dice reaches zero.

I see, so this ghost-mocking(situation) must be because the Old Deus is holding the soul.

——*Why?*

00a: The game board is an imitation of reality, but, the events that occur there are all real, including death.

If there are no lies in this rule, then *deaths aside from the loss of dice* should be *immediate deaths.*

The deaths from self-destruction and from the tasks with death indication means [instant death], and the loss of dice only means [dropping out].

Does the Old Deus have any purpose, or any reason at all, to set up this kind of rule?

In the first place——what inconveniences could there be for the Old Deus in [immediate death through the loss of dice]?"

Going back a hundred steps, even if there was anything, wouldn't it be fine if it just locked the soul somewhere?

Then this strange situation is——

This strange state(rule)——where you can move around in a spiritual body, but only in the case of getting the dice stolen and [dropping out].

——*Wouldn't that be **this side's intention**——?*

*If Sora and the others, and Miko-sama too, **don't have any intention of losing or dying at all**, then——*

Then this is the thing that Sora and the others prepared, and that Miko-sama is trying to outdo.

——*I can only think of this as a [set-up towards the victory]——!!*

……Or so it should be……probably. Perhaps……surely?

While Ino couldn't even be sure of anything anymore, and was feeling slightly depressed at his own dumbness.

He unsteadily went towards the Naval Garrison Post and Surveillance Office……as he groaned, writhing in shame.

And so, the soul(Ino) disturbed the Werebeasts(staff) who unfortunately possessed the five senses able to perceive him――

"……*sigh*, forgive me. It seems that I have surprised you, huh……"

"Being surprised don't even begin to cover……the applications for a immediate transfer of job got flooded――n-nothing! What about you Secretary of Foreign Affairs Hatsuse, are you all……right――? ~~~~*I don't really get it but anyway I'm glad!!*"

……The incomprehensible is, literally, something that's cannot be understood.

Persisting in understanding it will instead result in a misunderstanding――so when one is confronted with that kind of incomprehensible thing,

――Those who are able to chant the strongest magic called [well, whatever], are the strong.

Towards the strong female officer(one) who was able to accept it all with "somehow I don't really get it but anyway that's good"――

"What is your full name and affiliation?"

"Y-yes! I am Kanae Chitose, Chief Secretary of the Naval Garrison Post and Surveillance Office, affiliated to the Kagura Sea!"

――*Hmm*. Ino narrowed his eyes and nodded deeply.

Her appearance was young despite her high class――and it contained competence, and charm. She has the coolness and conjecture to make precise situation judgments even before a ghost(myself), and had the courage and determination to call out to him. Incidentally――this is what is important, but ――she also have a rich chest for a girl of low stature from the squirrel race, and it really bounces up a lot, in particular, it was truly in a "good time to eat"――

"……Once things calms down, how would you like to work in my secretary's office?"

Ino did an immoral[44] confusion of the public and private with a straight face.

"――!? Y-yes! I'd gladly――wait, n-no, more importantly!"

Kanae Chitose's face brightened up for a moment at the uncommonly huge promotion――but she shook her head,

"There is a matter which there was no one present who could handle it, but if it's the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Hatsuse then――I'll be reporting now!"

——Hm. She really acts coolly, and her situation judgment is also precise ——I like her.

And more than anything, he liked her habit of shaking her arms together when she shook her head——making even her rich chest shake.

She decidedly shall be my personal secretary. Let's lay the groundwork for the parties concerned.

"Currently, the Surveillance Office is in the middle of an issued Type-2 Alert. At 10:02 of today, in the westward of the Kagura Sea——"

"……Elven Garde's fleet is being deployed……isn't that so?"

"——Y-you are aware of it!?"

Ino——who had put the matter about the secretary aside for the moment——nodded at her voice, who had gasped in astonishment.

He was aware of it——no, *he had seen it.*

Ino, who had been released from his [vessel], had the same five senses as when using the [Blood Devastation]——he could see the wind cutting the waves so well that he even had the illusion that he was able to "visualize" the back of the horizon.

Coming from the north towards the south, the western sea was filled up with a great fleet.

——There was no need to confirm the ship's nationality. It had a form that was like a flower blooming on the sea.

There's only one country that would build that kind of ship(thing), whose principle for moving was incomprehensible——the same went for the "purpose" of its advance.

"……An *oceanic blockade*——isn't it……?"

"We think so, but there's no statement from it……since that sea castle isn't in the territorial waters of the Federation, handling it is……"

That's right, those were [international waters] that didn't belong to any country; such was the pact they all had agreed upon.

But, to line up all these vessels in the cornerstone of the trade route that connected the Eastern Union and Elven Garde, in a plan to physically block it ——that wasn't anything short of a "economic attack", a gray zone that's extremely close to black.

But something like that didn't matter——what mattered was, *why now.*

For the current Eastern Union——for the Elkia Federation, the oceanic blockade from just a single country(Elven Garde) was meaningless.

Oceanic resources(Eastern Union), continental resources(Elkia), seabed resources(Oceando)——the stockpiling was also abundant, and they all came early, influencing the economy in an annual basis.

Therefore, an economic attack——the "construction of a situation where the only option was to comply to the game" won't be achieved.

Not to mention that Elven Garde had been *given the wrong information* about the Eastern Union's game.

So conversely, this situation is favorable, and the Eastern Union's certain victory was unshakable——then.

——This situation(rule) where one becomes the mockery of a ghost if they dropped out.

The meaning intended by Sora——or maybe Miko-sama was——Ino pondered ——and at that time.

The reception room's atmosphere shook, without making any sound.

In the next moment, two girls had appeared as if they had cut off and dropped the stage's curtain——they raised their voices.

"……Oh my~? And to think I would be able to see a ghost, you really can't know what will happen in life~♪"

"——!? F-Fiel!? W-who are you talking to!? W-whe-when we were little you promised that you wouldn't do such threats anymore, didn't you!?"

The elf with a soft blonde hair and a rich chest opened her eyes slightly amazed and cheerfully.

In contrast——the black-haired Immanity with a tear-inducing chest was looking around inside the room with her eyes somewhat teary.

——Fiel Nirvalein.

——And Chlammy Zell.

Although it was the first time they meet, Ino saw and heard about them.

They conspired with Blank and gave out the wrong information about the Eastern Union's game——they are [traitors](spies).

"Of course~ we're working today, so I'll act like a child but with moderation, alright~♪"

Fiel snapped her fingers slightly, and Ino felt the presence of elementals—— he perceived a magic's interference.

Maybe she had used some kind of magic for the sake of the Immanity who couldn't visualize a spiritual body(Ino), because——

"——Hi-hiih!! It was better when I couldn't see it, but just *what* is this disgusting thing!!!"

——At the explosive birth of the fluorescent macho——revised, shining "luminous macho",

"Uwah~ the [Ten Oaths] are quite loose huh~……could something like *existential violence* really be allowed~?"

“I-i, it’s alright, Hatsuse-sama! I think it’s a burly body——i-if it didn’t shine!”

————*They’re all so disrespectful, every single one of them.*

Calming down his muscles that raged at the unjust insult with a [calm, calm[45]], Ino said.

“Should I say——*I have been waiting for you*, I wonder?”

This is the intention of this situation(the rule) where one becomes the mockery of a ghost once they drop out——!

Whoever [dropped out] in the middle of the game——would create a situation where they’d meet those two——

As expected, Ino didn’t know the true meaning behind it, but——!!

ゴ
ゴ
ゴ
ゴ

“——Fiel, I’ll confirm one more time, alright. It’s, not a ghost……right?”

“Yes~. Although his appearance would make even ghosts grow legs and run away~, it’s going exactly as the planned~”

Exactly as the planned——at the murmur that confirmed Ino’s speculations, Chlammy came out forward,

“*ahem*, well then……Eastern Union’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Hatsuse Ino-san, correct?”

“And you are Chlammy Zell-dono, right? I have heard about you.”

“Then this makes things faster. This game is accepting “intrusions”——halfway participation, right?”

——*The* ***interference from outside*** *of the game board is the stepping stone for the [victory]——!*

Ino smiled at the “arrival of reinforcements”, and Chlammy too returned a smile.

“Yeah. Well then——let’s start the game?”

——But, the words that followed were:

“All of the Eastern Union’s lands, and in addition, every single one of its personnel and resources——*I demand all of it.*”

…….

………….

“——What……did you say, just now?”

“Was that too hard to understand?”, Chlammy said so to Ino, who was barely able to let out so.

Letting out an small smile——she reworded it……more clearly.

“——*It’s a declaration of war.* I’m telling you to hand over everything the Eastern Union has. Do you get it now?”

Chapter 4 — Strange Taste(Why)

……Wind blew even in the wasteland.

The sand that was raised by the dry wind caressed a small shadow.

Without even quivering, the shadow's powerless limbs were sprawled in the ground, just like a corpse.

——*twitch*.

The corpse——correction, the shadow shook as the ground trembled slightly.

At the faint sound that shook the ground, the shadow thought——*[Prey].*

As if to point out that for the other shadow at his side, it moved without breathing or raising any voice.

Like a flowing mud. Like the crawling of the earth. The two shadows crawled closer soundlessly——but.

With its keen hearing, the [Prey] reacted like the weak would, and turned back.

It was a wise decision, fitting for an herbivore(the weak)——in other words, it was [to escape].

I see, so one should run away instead of opposing something of an unknown nature——how clever.

But——the [prey] didn't know——that that cleverness would kill it.

——If only it had chosen to [challenge] it instead of [escaping].

If it had the *foolishness to daringly challenge* that unknown something, then it would've easily survived.

That clever decision(escape) had been seen through by the shadows——by those who were even weaker than it, the overwhelmingly weak ones.

It probably didn't expect *that much*, but that was proof that it was just the strong(a beast).

The overwhelmingly weak——will not run. That's because they don't even have the legs(power) needed to outrun.

They [challenge], foolishly and clumsy, by stretching around a multitude of intelligent schemes. And then——,

——It happened at the same time as the [prey]'s shriek echoed through the dry atmosphere.

Stopping pretending to be mud, the shadow ran with its two legs and laughed ——*Strong one(beast), you are clever.*

And that's why, the choices you make through your own will and the path *you'll walk——those* ***can be read easily****.*

Leave but a single "trap"——at the end of those clever steps.

Just that will be enough for you.

——You'll proceed and fall into your annihilation, with your own legs——!!

And like that, the fangs of the fangless(weak) ones attacked the strong(prey) whose legs had been eaten by wooden jaws(the trap)———

……Wind and two war cries echoed even in the wasteland.

That was the proclaim of the life of those who challenged the law of the jungle(theory), and won the right to live the present.

That was the roar of the soul of the weaklings——the prided strength and blood of the overwhelmingly weak ones.

Aah, that was truly the figure of the ferocious "primordial humans", who risked their knowledge(power) for the sake of *surviving*——!!

——Although.

"……S-Sora~……Shiro~. A-are you alright~?"

When those two, who were also supposed to be the same "modern humans", got their names called out by the civilization(Steph),

"————gau?"

"………………uki?"

Tilting their heads, they handled the fawn(prey)——and held out the raw meat.

"I-I'm thankful that you feel like that, but……please remember the human language, alright……also, clothes too."

Steph retreat one step and groaned at that, as if appealing to them…….

————…………

——265th square. Seventy two days had passed since the start of the game.

In the wilderness(square) that reflected a nameless arid region in the border of the extreme west of Elkia's territory.

Those three, who had arrived after running out of food and stamina, were greeted by Izuna's lovely [task].

——[Catch the single ant with the smell of fish without hurting it, desu.]

Catch the ant that appeared through the task——it was impossible to be accomplished by Sora and the others, since they had no way of knowing the smell of ants from the very start, and as such they had to stay at a wasteland without any food for seventy-two hours——they were being told to "die" in a cutely way.

Sora picked up the tablet PC in a hurry——and while keeping the [Survival Guide] at hand, something he prayed for the day it would be useful to never come, he started hunting.

He attempted to do so while thinking of securing enough food for at least three days or, if possible, enough for the next movement……and he failed every time.

……That was natural.

It wouldn't be wilderness if it could be done with just the pretentious knowledge of a complete amateur(hikikomori gamer).

Even more so when they only had sixteen dice——no matter how they distributed them, it would be a Children Corps with only a single adult.

But——while the failures, fatigue and hunger increased, Sora inadvertently let out so along with a dry smile.

——*"Chasing and being chased……**this is like a game, isn't it**",* and then, at this single sentence he had let out,

The siblings exchanged looks——*"Just why am I(are you) laughing after losing continuously in a game?"*——

Exchanging nods wordlessly, they acted quickly with an eerily sharp look in their eyes.

In the blink of an eye——they made an sophisticated trap implemented through the prediction of behavior and induction, until finally saying "the sounds of the clothes rubbing are in the way" and dressing the bare minimum using the leather ripped out from the rucksack. And so, with a spear in one hand——it didn't took two days until they turned wild——

————…………

"A-anyway, we managed to get enough food for the immediate future, right!? Could you please go back already!?"

As the voice from the civilization called out——with seemingly hollow eyes, Sora stopped the hand that was handling the meat ,

"————Ah, I see. With this——is it "Game Clear"?"

And in the moment his mouth spoke those "hypnosis release(words)"——

"——Uwooooah my little sister!? Just what is a lady as young as you doing with such appearance!?"

"……Eh? ……ah……no, you're mistaken——t-these are……the clothes, that……N-Nii, made……!"

——It was just like how a certain pair ate the Fruit of Eden.
The two of them regressed back to the civilization and suddenly awakened to their sense of shame, raising shrieks at their own appearances.

Seeing the two ex-wild children that were one step away from fully naked ——with their bodies covered by only a sorry degree of clothing,

"……I raised up a flame. Hurry up and change——no, I guess you should start by cleaning up your bodies."

Steph said so and handed out a wet cloth——Sora, who was covered in dirt, realized one more thing.

The Fruit of Eden, the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge——referred to a [meal].

A man will know manners(shame) after he can afford clothes and food[46]—— isn't this quite profound?

They needed to be able to afford clothes and to know manners, so they hurried together and reached out for the clothes——

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

"Erm……I'm really grateful that we have food thanks to both of you, but……"

Steph breathed out quietly while watching the state of the bonfire.

The smoke that leaked out from the primitive heater devised by Shiro and built by Sora in a hole he dug in the ground was getting in their eyes.

Steph was originally in charge of cooking, but now even her share of work had been completely stolen away.

Sora quickly inserted the knife at the hunted prey with proficient hand movements and accurately dismembered it.

He chose the parts among them that were to be preserved, and Shiro too, with movements that seemed to be used to it, put them in the heater——

"……Don't you have any pride or dignity as a human being?"

——With the scorpion skewer in hand, Steph involuntarily let that escape.

Just where did that speech about human beings and stuff they did in front of the monster that Izuna took down, went to?

Sora, who was acting like he had a *eat everything that can be eaten* mindset ——suddenly laughed exaggeratedly,

"Sip mud and eat dirt!! Take back everything you said previously, be covered with shame and throw away your pride!! *Yet, go through with that which you cannot yield, and survive*——that's the sole pride, the dignity that people should protect!!”

——He spoke about “the pride of throwing away the pride”.

“Anything besides *that,* and you should sell it if it can be sold or eat it if it can be eaten——if it’s in the way then just throw it away.”

…….

…………*silence*…….

A moment of silence occurred after Sora said so and gnawed at the scorpion ——and then.

“……Nii, is super cool……even though, you’re a, NEET……”

“……I almost felt impressed for a moment, but isn’t that the kind of remark a incorrigible fiend would say……?”

Shiro’s respectful gaze and Steph’s cold gaze were concentrated on him.

——Sora had simply but coolly declared that *if it was necessary then it didn’t matter how shameful it was*——but suddenly.

“……“incorrigible fiend”, that reminded me……Sora.”

“Was that prelude really necessary, Sora firmly ignores it as Sora replies[47] ——what is it?”

Ignoring Sora as he was obviously pretending to be crying, Steph gazed at the skewer anxiously——

“……Ino-san really didn’t die, right?”

——[Even if we do betray each other, we won’t kill each other]——.

Steph once felt relieved at the basis for that line that Sora spoke meaningfully, but——

“Hm~? Yeah, he isn’t dead. For now, that is.”

……*Right. It’s merely “for now”*——Steph’s expression clouded at once.

But Sora and Shiro continued comfortably, without stopping their hands that were building up the heater.

“Don’t worry about it so much……if what we set up go wrong——”

“……everyone……will die, anyway……”

“……That’s right, isn’t it. If the goal isn’t reached then everyone but the leading ones will die, won’t they.”

16: In the case of becoming [Unable to Continue], the Old Deus in question will be granted the right to COLLECT EVERYTHING from all participants, except from the Leading Player.

——If no one ascends and the game turns impossible to continue, then either way everyone aside of the Leading Player will die.

Maybe it was because she thought back on the rules, but she seemed to have renewed her decision about winning no matter what.

As if to cheer up Steph, who had strengthened her own resolve and gnawed at the strange food, Sora and Shiro spoke——

“That’s how it is! Since *everyone will die except for the Old Deus* that’s in the lead, we have to get some energy!!”

“……We don’t have, time, to be picky……, ……eat.”

“Eh.”

“Eh.”

“……? eh……”

Steph froze up, Sora tilted his neck, and Shiro——tried reading the mood and said so too.

“Ha, haaaaah!? Eh, what do you mean, why would everyone aside of the Old Deus——”

“Eh? Because, that Old Deus did say so at the beginning, didn’t it: *I await at the end, *kiri!*[48]*”

“……The Old Deus, too……*is a participant*……the one who’s in the, lead……is always, the Old Deus……**munch* *munch**”

——They said so easily, as if it was completely someone else’s business.

Steph shouted out after the premises got overturned, but Sora and Shiro tilted their heads in doubt and answered her.

“If no one reaches the goal then forget about lead and all that crap, all of [the challengers](us) will see Buddha. But that doesn’t matter. What we have to do remains the same, it’s something we’re tired of knowing already, and on top of that it’s a rule that doesn’t concern us.”

“W-why it doesn’t!? It’s because there’s this rule that everyone is competing to get ahead and——”

“That’s because [ ](we) absolutely wouldn’t agree with a rule where *only one person won’t die*.”

“……………………!”

——Steph held her breath for a moment at Sora, who declared so with a serious expression and his eyes narrowed.

“If even a single one ascends then no one will die——if it’s this one then everyone would agree on it……*there’s no choice*.”

That’s right, “this side” is the one that had to agree——And that’s because ——

“I told you that it’s by betraying each other that victory can be achieved, didn't I? There's Plum that, in this game where he had no need to play nor had any way of winning, he set it up so that *he could win without ascending*. Just like Ino said, you can also set it up to hijack our win——but, that also goes for *Miko-san whose life is temporarily being held up*——and for everyone else too; they *cannot betray* unless they agree with that, right♪"

"…………"

Sora laughed carefree, but Steph appealed her lack of understanding wordlessly.

"——Well, it's fine if you get only *this*."

While looking as if he wasn't seeking her understanding, Sora summed it up boldly.

"Be it this one or that one, it doesn't matter who it is: everyone set it up so that they will be the ones to win it——"

In this game, if someone reaches the goal then no one will die.

But, with those members——since only one person can reach the goal, then ——

——[Then I'll be the one to win]*, do you really think they didn't thought so?* ——

"Then what matters——is simply "under whose setting(scenario) are things proceeding", right?"

"……Nii……it's about time, there's two hours, remaining……"

"Uwoooah, hey, wait there I'm not done yet heating it up! S-Shiro, I'll leave the luggage to you!"

Panicking, Sora hastened the hand that was fanning the fire of the heater and instructed her to fold up the luggage.

——The task would be deemed as incomplete and the three of them would lose one dice each, so he was also thinking about the dice distribution——

"——I-if that's the case, then what about the Old Deus……?"

Hesitantly, she asked Sora and Shiro who were moving in a hurry.

"If everyone set that up——then the Old Deus also did so, didn't she!?"

——*Then, shouldn't she be able to set it up so that* ***no one would be able to ascend?***

Steph raised a shriek at her unusual guess, but Sora, without stopping the hand that fanned the fire——asked.

"Hey——in the first place, *just what is a Old Deus*, I wonder?"

Receiving a suddenly question in return, Steph made a blank face. Sora then slowly raised up his gaze.

The spiral continent separated into squares that floated in the heavens——a far too magnificent game board.

"……It's "a concept that obtained a sense of self"……itself……"

"Y-yes……I also heard so……it makes absolutely no sense at all, though?"

That's right, it was also recorded like that in the books Jibril had and that Shiro read.

Coincidentally, just like Steph, Sora also held his head being unable to make any sense out of it.

——It's a complicated question that he swallowed up as *[It's another one of those absurdities that rejects understanding].*

The transcendentally strong ones didn't flock together nor did they have a Sole Representative……therefore there's also no way to steal the Race Piece ——then.

——It wasn't weird at all for them to think that in this world the gods are the players, and everyone else are mere pieces.

But——*if that's true, then*, Sora gave a small laugh.

It was this mysterious game's greatest mystery——in other words.

"……I wonder what is someone so great like an Old Deus is even doing by playing a game with us(the pieces)."

——*Why did this game get established*——

Steph froze up after being told the mystery that was a question far too basic.

Third of the [Ten Oaths]——In games, each player will bet something that they agree is of equal value.

In this game, no one has to die if someone reach the goal, but on the other hand they'll have everything stolen by the Old Deus.

Just what in these mere pieces(Sora and the others) would a god of all things "deem to be of equivalent value" to its entire being?

"Even more so when it's a game……where the Old Deus(oneself) knows clearly that *losing is possible*——see?"

"……Y,yes?"

——*The Old Deus did "not" prepare anything to give him a guaranteed victory.*

Steph, who got that hidden declaration, had question marks floating around her, but——Sora simply laughed.

——In the first place, it's a game where you don't kill by betrayal(dice), and even if you do try to kill(task) you still end up failing.

It's a game with enough chance to win with no one dying simply by having someone act in self-interest and ascend.

On top of that——it's a game where most of the rules were created through the will of Sora and the others.

But——in this game where even the reason for the Old Deus having complied was a mystery,

There are rules that could only have been inserted through the Old Deus' own judgment——there's [three] of them.

If those three are what the Old Deus prepared——furthermore, if they are her will itself, then——

"Now here's a question! It's about that "only the Leading Player will be spared" rule!!"

Sora shouted out one of them in a weird tension.

"It didn't get everyone's approval, and since the Old Deus is always on the lead, it's a rule that doesn't concern us! But this rule also has nothing to do with the Old Deus itself, regardless if she wins or lose! Well then, *I wonder just who does this rule concerns!?*"

——That's right. If no one ascends, the Old Deus will take everything.

But if someone ascends, then that person will take everything. If it's like that,

Then this rule *is a rule that has no meaning for any of them*……but then, just why did it exist——?

"A big hint! It's "what did disappear along with the Old Deus" at the game's start!!"

——Steph tried to remember something that had happened about one month ago, but Sora thought.

Please no need to worry——because I didn't expect any answer from Steph at all——!

"……"Miko-san's"……body……disappeared……along, with it……"

"*ding dong ding dong*, that's right!!* The one who answered correctly will be presented with a "hug"!!"

Sora help up Shiro, who had answered instantly, along with the heater they finally completed, and shouted while he danced.

Steph seemed to be regretting that she was unable to get the correct answer, but putting her aside——

A meaning had been given to the meaningless rule ……and that was:

"No matter who wins, only *Miko that's on the leading square together with the Old Deus* will be saved——that includes the Old Deus(me) losing——and that's due to that rule that could only be inserted through the Old Deus' own judgment, you see."

That's right——it can freely handle Miko's life, having [collected] it before the game.

In other words, that Old Deus did so with a rule only it could insert——but, what it really did was:

——*Even if I lose*, "Miko-san's life alone should be guaranteed", or so it came down to.

Then the remaining two preparations(rules) too……if you think about its intention——

Sora let out a bitter smile at his own thoughts.

He lowered Shiro, and in instead he carried the luggage they had finished packing up on his back,

"……Just what is a god. I never met one in the other world, and I only heard about it from rumors, though."

——For example.

Maybe it's an entertainer that warns beforehand: *do not eat the Fruit of Wisdom, you absolutely musn't eat it*, and then snaps once its eaten.[49]

Maybe it's an attention seeker that secludes itself despite being a Sun God, and then shows his face outside once he hears a festival.[50]

Maybe it's a lower body supremacist that keep having affairs while making solemn excuses that *it's for the sake of the universe*.[51]

If it's just like those from the rumors, then all of them sounded completely human.

Also, although they sounded like humans, they're actually *tilted towards the no-good humans*——but.

"After coming here(to Disboard) and actually meeting god——I saw that they're all the same(similar)……"

Surprisingly, maybe the rumors in the previous world weren't really that off the mark?, Sora let out a wry smile.

"One of them is a lonely person[52] who got seriously heated up just because he lost at chess and called us out without any appointment, you see?"

"……Tet is, the first one……to make, Shiro……lose……at……"loneliness power[53]"……"

"It's about time for you guys to receive some punishment, you know……just what do you think the Sole God——"

——Just what is a god?

Sora and Shiro didn't know, and to be honest——they don't even care.

But when the rules were being explained——the way that god looked at them for a moment made both of them think.

It seemed to have almost no interest in whether it would win or lose——it was like it was saying that nothing mattered.

But its eyes seemed to be blaming something, even though the person itself didn't seem to be aware of it——

"——And so, the other one is a little girl that's sulking due to being forced to play a game after getting *set up by a certain fox*……

A concept that obtained a sense of self——it was too far from such a grandiose title.

Like how it was said in Sora's previous world——that completely human-sounding God.

——*That crying child.*

Just what did it seek, and what did it prepare——something like that……,

"……At the very least, it would be——*something that has nothing to do winning or losing*, wouldn't it."

Walking side-by-side, Sora and Shiro thought as they looked up to the ends of the heavens.

Surely it was something terribly simple and self-despairing——but, that was exactly why it was something critical.

"It's in a setting where winning is easy, but winning normally is equivalent to losing, so……"

"……For, example……like a *payback*, or something like that……right……"

Steph followed their backs with her eyebrows frowned dubiously at what both of them said——………

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

——In short, this was a [sneak thieving].

In the Reception Room of the Eastern Union's Naval Garrison Post and Surveillance Office, there were two people relaxing graciously in the sofa at the opposite side of Hatsuse Ino.

They were Clammy and Fiel——those whom he had expected to be the reinforcements(allies)——or so he had concluded.

Hand over everything the Eastern Union has!, the girl had said so at such a time and situation.

"It's not that complicated, right. It's quite simple——"

——And with a smile, she spoke about her plot.

"It's a scenario where the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Hatsuse Ino-sama, during a time where Miko was *coincidentally* absent, judged the two “fools” who had caused a meaningless oceanic blockade and bet one entire province as [easy targets], and after complying to what was supposed to be a sure-win game——the same game as the one Elven Garde had received the wrong information about——he lost, becoming a “huge fool”.”

——Making an oceanic blockade and betting of one entire province, all of that——

“*Complying reasonably, and losing reasonably*——even your personal acting is perfect, isn’t it?”

“You may lick our shoes to show your gratitude, you know~ But only if you’ll be cleaning and deodorizing them properly later, though♪”

——*Aren’t those two supposed to be Sora’s conspirators——allies, or collaborators——!?*

Unable to cool down his confusion, Ino’s thoughts remained as mere questions.

“Ye~s♪ The senate was given the wrong information about the Eastern Union’s game, just like Sora-san wanted——*far from being an ally,* I’m but the overly-used clown, Fiel Nirvalein~❤”

Maybe she had read his thoughts with magic, since Fiel replied while smiling.

——*No, there’s no way she could read it*, Ino brushed off his own shiver.

Even for high level magic, the browsing and alteration of thoughts or memories was considered *harm*——it’s a violation of the [Oaths].

But, based on the presence of elements——Ino assumed that there was a magic that worked similarly to the Werebeasts’ *cold reading*.

Actually, even though he was at such close distance——*he couldn’t read anything* out of those two.

Their breathing, pulse, body heat……they were disturbing all of them with magic.

“Elven Garde was certainly told the wrong information about the Eastern Union’s game——but.”

And then, while he was unable to know anything, not even if it was truth or lie——

“——I never heard anything about we not being able to be the Elven Garde that came to challenge.”

——The black-haired girl said so with the exactly same smile as that man.

“And thus, without a single person in Elven Garde knowing about the Eastern Union’s game’s true identity nor about our secret maneuvers, the Eastern Union will switch out from Elkia Federation——from [　　](those two), to us. And then, it’ll become a stepping stone for us to engulf Elkia Federation(those two)……Huh? Hey Fii, it hasn't changed much compared to the current situation, has it?"

"It'll be even better, since one province from Elven Garde will be added *to our Federation~♪*"

"Maybe we were too gentle with our demands……? Well, it doesn't matter either way."

——*The Eastern Union isn't even in our sights.*

Those two were saying that they didn't had any interest in anything but in all of the Elkia Federation——in Sora and Shiro(those two)——

"Of course, if this scenario isn't to your tastes then, we do have a different one prepared, you see?"

Clammy laughed darkly——on her side, a sphere of light appeared on Fiel's raised hand.

It was a multilayered structural magic formula——it was originally impossible for a Warbeast(Ino) to understand, or even visually perceive it at all.

But, judging by her intention as she daringly visualized it and showed it off, it was evident as to what kind of magic that was.

——Anti-Eastern Union Magic——"Countermeasure Formula for Video Games"

""This" will be leaked to the senate(govern)——I wonder if you prefer this kind of unfortunate scenario, instead?"

——Then the enemy won't be those two, but it would change to Elven Garde itself.

The barbarians posing as gentlemen would come attacking like locusts, stealing everything from the Werebeasts, violating and dominating.

If you don't want that, then play the game right now—— and lose.

As the girl——no, the witches' eyes were telling him that they wouldn't wait until Miko, Sora and the others came back, Ino roared in his mind.

——*Why.*

——***Why it had to be at such time***——*!!*

"It's obviously because *it's at such time~* This dog is bad on the head, isn't it~?"

"I'll teach you if you don't know, but——I have Sora's memories, you see?"

Sora, who knew from the very start that there was a Old Deus behind Miko.

Sora, who was always waiting for an chance to wage a game against that Old Deus.

If Chlammy, who knows all of that just like him, were to start an Anti-Old

Deus War——

“Including the important personnel, the position of the Sole Representatives affiliated with the Elkia Federation——will become virtually empty, right?”

——*If Sora had prepared everything from the very start, then.*

Then it’s also obvious that everything could’ve been read beforehand and then made use of.

“……Well, you being here was more convenient than expected, though.”

“It’s a moment where the Sole Representative is absent, so anyone would’ve been fine, though. All we had to do was to keep searching for the positions bellow and bellow successively until we reach the one with the second position~♪[54]”

“It’s far easier when compared to doing it to someone whom you don’t even know……right?”

If you omitted all of that, she was saying that all the rights from the Eastern Union were currently laying upon Hatsuse Ino, the “Secretary of Foreign Affairs”.

——Everything was for the sake of this moment, this *timing*, this very moment——

“——We really went through a lot of trouble to *make it in time*, you know?……But, well♪”

“If we get to see Sora-san’s face in tears then~ it’s a cheap trouble~♪”

It was as if they were affirming that they weren’t perceived by anyone until now, and from now on they wouldn’t be either, only for that.

——The two witches that secretly stole a territory from the world’s greatest country——the country of the races that excelled the most at magic, Elven Garde——laughed.

“We won’t let the game with the Old Deus……end without us~♪”

“Yes——*we will not allow it to end*. Now——shall we start the game?”

There was a chilly smile in the place where both truth and lie were uncertain——but, there was weird feeling about it.

Do not repeat the mistake of the game with the Old Deus, Ino hit himself with a whip and continued his thoughts calmly.

——[You being here was more convenient than expected]……than expected——that’s “un”expected.

The authenticity of her remarks was unclear, but “ghost-mocking(this rule)” was unnecessary to the plan of those witches——anyone was fine.

Then this was really Sora’s, or maybe Miko’s intention——but what kind of intention it could have.

Did they read those two's attack, and entrusted the interception to Ino?

——Can he win?——[No].

The full-dive model video game was originally a game of sure-victory, impossible to be interfered with magic.

——But if they knew about it beforehand they could prepare countermeasures, and that was why they had been erasing the memories.

Not to mention that those two knew the contents of the game, and even had a countermeasure formula.

——Is it a bluff?——[No].

He can't read it out due to the magic disturb, but they would simply lose if it was a bluff——!

"Just, what is this……! Just who drew this scenario, and for what purpose——!?"

Unintentionally, Ino's distress leaked out from his mouth——right away, a voice was heard.

"Ah, yes? *It's a scenario that I drew for my own sake*, but……did you call?"

It was the alluring voice of a screechy girl teasing others.

Their gazes turned around all at once, and on its end was a girl that had appeared in the center of the room at some time——no.

It was a "young boy" that seemed somewhat to have a sad fate——even though he was so beautiful that you could confuse him with a girl——

"P-Plum-dono……!?"

"Yes, it's the Prince of Dhampirs who's renowned to have little presence, Plum Stalker!"

His appearance was faintly transparent. He must've [dropped out] just like Ino, and now has his death on hold.

Maybe he's using some kind of magic, since Clammy, who was glaring at him sharply,

"——You, since——"

"……Since when you were *there*……?"

She got interrupted by Fiel,who had lost her composure——and asked with a piercing glare.

"Ahaha~……that question is slightly wrong."

Brushing aside that blade-like killing intent as if he was simply tired of it——or amazed by it, "The correct question is——since when I was *here* ♥As for the answer——"

It happened on the moment that Plum corrected so.

Everyone who had been in the Naval Garrison Post and Surveillance Office's reception room were suddenly moved down——twenty-two floors bellow.

They were in a huge underground hall, where the main frame of the Full-Dive Model Virtual Game could be seen.

There was no context, it had been suddenly, and abruptly.

The light swayed and shook like it was a heat's haze——immediately afterwards, the scenery changed, and they were here.

Even Ino's five senses that were currently equivalent to when he was under [Blood Devastation] was unable to perceive anything——not even the presence of elements.

There wasn't tables or sofa there. Everyone was simply and uniformly sitting on the ground——

"It's *from the very beginning*. You two haven't entered the reception room even once, ahahah."

As Plum drifted alone in the air, Fiel opened her eyes surprised and stopped smiling.

——Ino understood what had happened, so there was no need for any more proof.

The opponent was a caster that, with just two people, could make not just elves——but the country of the elves(Elven Garde) itself, crumble down.

But Plum induced them into going to the wrong place——and without allowing them to perceive, or even suspect that fact even once.

Due to the [Oaths], it was impossible to tamper with someone else's visual recognition——to cause direct "infringement".

Then——.

"[Spatial Camouflage](Surprise)——it's a token of welcoming and of my goodwill……did you enjoy it?"

"………………"

——It meant that a high level caster elf was completely outdone in a contest of magic.

As Fiel and Chlammy became silent at that fact, and turned their gazes to him as if stabbing him with it——

"Eh~[Fiel just who is this guy!?], [He's a Dhampir, ranked number 12], [The one who became comrade!? Why is he here, wasn't he supposed to be over there(in the Old Deus' game)?]——Ah, I'll answer that one."

“————!?”

The conversation Fiel must’ve had put many conceals upon was sloppily, easily broken through.

His eyes and wings——were dyed brilliantly in a blood-like red.

“But before that——I’m also renowned for my politeness, so I’ll respectfully ask this: trying to use [Covert Magic](secret talk) against a Dhampir(me)? Please know your place♪”

Plum said so with the same unfortunate smile as always——and started again.

“Let’s see. The question should be *why did you think I wasn’t here*, instead.”

——The light shook, and once again the scenery changed.

The wind stroked the grassland that extended as far as the eye could see until the horizon, and a single tree stood there.

Sitting elegantly in a chair on its shadow, Plum tilted the tea cup and smiled——

”I mean, that rule where you turn into a ghost if you drop out——the one who set that up was undoubtedly me.”

“Wha——!?”

“Ah~no, well……I don’t have any memories of it, though……but, you see, this rule——”

Now it was Ino who held back a scream.

But Plum, supporting his cheeks with both hands in the table and with a full smile——declared.

“It’s meaningless for anyone else but *for me who called those two out*, isn’t it♥”

——.

————Called out……?

While not only Ino, but now even Chlammy and Fiel also lost their words,

“I mean, no matter the rule, there’s no meaning for me to play a game with the Old Deus at all……why would I do something like that? I don’t care about that Old Deus at~all~♪”

Plum squashed his mouth as if he was sulking, and while he waved his legs——he continued.

“But, if you say that it’s absolutely necessary, then——*I want to have a profit*, right♪ And that was when!”

He stood up from the chair like he was dancing——*spin*.

Plum spun, and the scenery spun together——now it was the Elkia’s Royal Castle during an audience——

“I’m also renowned for being gentle, so I won’t tell who it was, but! *While making it think that I had found it out by myself,* I told a certain sli~ghtly overconfident person the correct date of the Old Deus battle, you see?”

Ignoring Fiel whose face had flinched, he yet, once gain——**spin**.

Plum, with so much as kicking the ground, spun while bringing along the scenery——to Avant Heim——

“And so, against those two who worked so hard and came all this way from so far~~hm~~well~~the one who would probably end up [dropping out] no matter how things turned out, Ino-sama! Ah, surely he would be troubled greatly——and that’s when!!”

From the chambers of the Oceando’s Queen to the Eastern Union’s Shrine of the Priestess’s garden; it happened while the scenery kept moving incessantly.

——**bishi*[55]*.

He did what could be the was the coolest pose he could think of.

“Ino-sama would weep in gratitude towards me, who gallantly appeared and easily repelled those two, and would offer to express his thanks, but!! I, who am also renowned for my humility——would answer like this!”

Supporting his chin with the finger, and as if he was looking distant, Plum spoke resolute.

“*……Heh, I only did the obvious. And if it’s about repaying, then I have already received it!!*”

——And, still with an expression that seemed say *It’s your smile*,

“As “deposit(appetizer)”, you’ll be offering fifty Werebeasts(livestock) for bloodsucking annually——and,”

——He lined up words that brought into them a despairing expression instead of an smile——in other words.

“The “contingency fee(main dish)” will come after *receiving the custody of the elf over there*……ehehehe~♥”

——*Add the aforementioned two things into the betting plate,* he had implicitly told them so.

“If I were to suck as much blood as I want from an elf, the highest ranked one of the races from which bloodsucking is possible——”

Since the queen of the Seirens woke up, the breeding of male Dhampirs is no longer an issue.

Then what should be done next?

That’s obvious, isn’t it?

"Then I can make those seafood fall into a game anytime I want, and release the Dhampirs from the chains of the treaty♪"

……Is this guy screwing around?

Ino became speechless at that, but Plum continued with an smile.

"——Or so this is the scenario I had prepared *much more before* than the memories that got erased when the game started, so I don't~care~at~all about that game……but since I agreed to it, and participated……"

No——he is screwing around, Ino clenched his teeth.

He was seriously, and completely earnestly——making a messed-up demand.

This playful Dhampir——even the Old Deus game was *simply used by him* ——

"I *only had to make my die get stolen as soon as possible*——that's something I definitely wouldn't yield at♪"

——*If you don't want the Eastern Union to be stolen then give me sacrifices[56].*

There's no option besides swallowing those messed-up demands——I was brought up into such messed-up scenario——!!

"You bastard——!! You'll also die by losing to the Old Deus. Do you get the situation!?"

As the voice barked in rage, Plum seemed to wonder in an expression full of acting,

"Hm~……Well, probably Sora-sama who's always talking big, or maybe someone else will win it, right? If at least one person ascends, then I'll get the highest profit——*I set it up that way*, after all. And you know♪"

He sat down, as if there was a chair in the empty space——he said without hesitation.

"It's more entertaining to bet on the side with the highest odds(lower chance of winning), isn't it♥"

The Dhampir who claimed to have written out this scenario spat out a line far from sanity.

If Sora and the others won, I will be profiting under someone else's fight. If you die by losing then everyone will be sharing the same fate, and ***that was it*** ——.

"……Fii, I'll be asking frankly. Can you use the countermeasure formula——having "that" as your opponent?"

It's useless to hide it any longer, Chlammy asked.

"Chlammy, did you know~? In order to not be noticed, the mosquitoes anesthetize before they bite~”

Fiel said so with an smile that was like the sun——*“but~”*, she continued mildly,

“*But if you do notice*, then it’s but a [entertainment-purpose insect] that’s only there for you to beat and kill it♥”

But she answered as if she was literally beating to death the Dhampir in front of her, with her diamond-shaped eyes shining in a pale light.

——*“There’s no problem”,* she said——but.

“Ahaha……then, with the touching effort you’re making to “act like an Quad Caster”——
As voice came not from the place she was looking, but from behind her, Fiel turned around——and opened her eyes in surprise.

“I, *who was wrong about you having noticed,* must be a harmful insect that won’t even be of any entertainment, isn’t that right?♥”

The “two Plums” faced each other like mirrored images, entangled the fingers of both hands and laughed.

“For a *mere* Hexa Caster to even try [Multiple Formula Concealment] against me; dreams is something you see in the bed, you know.”

——Since when……or maybe it had been “from the very start”. Or maybe it was still “ongoing”.

Fiel was laying in a bed, as if the time had went missing, and the process omitted.

Her eyes that were open in astonishment were being glanced at by a “third Plum”, that was on the side of the bed while supporting his chin with both hands——

“A Dhampir’s *original power*——it’s been over six thousand years since the last demonstration♪Did that surprise you?”

“…………I’ll admit it, a slight~ly troublesome mosquito was mixed in……”

After Fiel murmured so, suddenly…….

She stopped smiling as if the mask had been peeled off, threw away the blanked and stood up.

——The Warbeast(Ino) , whose limit was sensing the presence of magic and elements, didn’t understand what was happening.

But, he was able to roughly guess the situation from the faint presence of elements.

In contrast to Fiel——who used magic by letting the presence of the elements flow incessantly, intricately and in multiple layers, comfortably like a poetry——in Plum’s case, there wasn’t even any sign of it.

The presence of magic, elements——no, even the signs of their existence——everything was being concealed.

Conceal the signs of the use of magic, conceal the signs of the concealing magic, conceal the signs of the concealing magic that's concealing……even by overlapping those kinds of formulas endlessly, it wouldn't become a perfect concealment. But then that would mean the Dhamphir, who was unable to use multi-layered formulas,

——Was doing so "with but a single formula".

"——I said that I was the only one who'd benefit from this rule of turning into a mere soul, didn't I?"

Everyone gasped——and Plum, as if explaining that absurdity,

"While a certain relia~ble god is "securing my soul", I can use magic without having to worry about the attenuation of the soul……my bad, since I'm the only one who can cheat……ehe♪"

He put out his tongue, and with an smile, gave out an apologize he didn't even mean.

Towards their back, front, above; the evil glare kept crawling closer while changing positions, as if ignoring the space.

But Ino——no, Fiel and Chlammy too, everyone in that place thought.

"Cheat"……but that was something from before the blood-sucking was restricted and they got weakened——it was from before the [Ten Oaths].

——It was something that had made that Jibril say [During the Great War, it had been somewhat of a threat.]

————*That was unmistakably "the Dhampir's original power", and nothing else.*

"……Uuh, it kind of make me feel down when you get that much surprised……"

With the same star-crossed face as always, he grumbled and let out complaints.

"Being kept by the Seirens, getting outwitted by Sora and the others……the image of being a small fry has totally fixed already……it can't be helped that I'm thought of as just a sweat-lover, cross-dressing pervert of a bishounen, but……"

"—————So you were aware of it, huh……"

Although he was fully aware that it was out of place, Ino couldn't stop himself from saying so, and Plum——

……**ton**, he kicked the ground once again——with just that.

In the underground hall, their view opened to a scene where countless scenarios were cut, copied, pasted and patched together.

In a crazy space where the noon and night existed at the same time, Plum's purple eyes waved bewitchingly with a blood color, and he laughed.

"I'm a *rea~lly troublesome* sweat-lover, cross-dressing pervert and a bishounen——of a King of the Night(Nosferatu)♪"

The clothes and wings that braided the night melted as they waved, and dyed the space black as if it was returning to the night.

The blood patterns of his eyes transmitted to his wings, arms, and then to the space——swallowing it, and expanding while wavering irregularly.

Indoors and outdoors too. In the sky, sea and continent too. The morning, noon, and night too——it was as if they all said "I am here".

——[Where] would be [here]——[when] would be [now].

I am the one who define that——after all, that change was spoken through the bewitchingly smile of the supposedly confirmed Dhampir.

I will completely seal off the elves' [Countermeasure Formula]——he was saying so without a single speck of lie or bravado.

——But——inside his mind, Ino laughed at that scene.

Plum is committing a mistake——he's showing off his power too much.

In fact, Chlammy and Fiel were exchanging glances that said——*"what should we do"*.

If Chlammy and Fiel retreated, everything would be solved——!!

"Ah, it seems you thought something rude, but……"I won't let anyone escape", you know?"

And, as if having heard those thoughts——the evil smile cut off their retreat.

"If you don't incorporate my demands right now and start the game just as planned……then I, who am also renowned for being an errand runner, will "leak to the senate" that [trump card] you two have in your instead♪"

"————!!"

Chlammy and Fiel clenched their teeth so strongly that its sound could almost be heard.

……*What's that about,* Ino asked in a monologue, and with an amazed face, Plum——

"Those two *cannot use* the trump card that is [the exposure of the Countermeasure Formula]……that's because——"

——*If they did that,* Plum answered while deepening his scorn.

"The takeover of the Elkia Federation would be impossible, and the Eastern Union would be destroyed. *Along with with both of them,* who have been moving while deceiving the senate and keeping secrecy about both the contents of the Eastern Union's game and the [Countermeasure Formula]♪That's why——"

And, this time for sure, they paled at the following smile.

"I, *who don't care at all about the Eastern Union nor the Elkia Federation,* will use it in their places——now, now! The two ducks who jumped into the oven while carrying onions! I'm sorry for taking it away like a villain, but ——if you're gonna do it, you have to do it thoroughly——for example!!"

Like this——, and Plum, with an scary smile,

"*I did not prepare another scenario*. If you don't want to be destroyed then let's play~♥Ohh~♪"

Towards all the members in that place, Plum softly, and radiantly——declared their ruin.

"……Fii, in the worst scenario, if we can't use the [Countermeasure Formula], then——"

"……Yes~. I'll at least seal up this parasite, down to his relatives~."

"Yess, that's the spirit!! I'm believing that you'll be able to use at least one spell against me!! It'll be more worth for me to make an smug expression when you're waking up from the "dream where you are using it"♪"

——Amid a scene that was enough to show off that it wasn't a bluff,

Chlammy clicked her tongue, Fiel was expressionless, and Ino——he thought.

——I see, so if it's Plum's scenario then it's possible to avoid the Eastern Union getting stolen.

It's even possible to obtain one part of Elven Garden——and the price for that was just an small amount of "sacrifices".

It's good enough of a profit for something that can be earned with just an insignificant sacrifice, or could you really say so?

But, having seen the Dhampir's——that monster's original power……Ino was convinced.

What awaited beyond that "insignificant sacrifice", was the liberation of the Dhampirs from the chains known as the cohabitation with the Seirens.

If it flourishes——it will be the liberation of a race that even the elves(Elven Garde) will probably turn out unable to deal with.

It may take some time. But it's sure that someday it will bring forth "a great sacrifice".

Should he reject Plum's scenario and face ruin right now?

Should he go along with Plum's scenario and face a ruin that's like getting strangled with a string?

Or should he support Chlammy and Fiel, lose intentionally, and hand over the Eastern Union?

——But, all of those choices.

They were but a matter of choosing ***who, when, and how many will be sacrificed****, aren't they——!!*

——Ahh……Miko-sama.

The game of the Old Deus was supposed to be one where no one would need to die, as long as someone reached the goal.

But due to my own foolishness, it happened inside the game, and due to Chlammy, Fiel and Plum's cleverness, it's happening on the outside.

This situation that, in the end, they're just killing each other.

Did Miko-sama——did those siblings saw this coming, I wonder…….

Then, what's that scenario.

Just where did that scenario where no one had to be sacrificed went————

Epilogue — Practical End

Almost at the same time.

Sora thought half-amazed with his head that had almost frozen up.

——*Just whose scenario is this?*

——A few minutes ago.

With their fifth move, Sora, Shiro and Steph were on the 296th square with three dice each.

And what greeted those three, who had arrived there with the leg length of a child seeming about to die, was——

"I have been waiting for you. *My Master, my Lord*[57], my owners……"

It was Jibril——who, with her five dice, held her sash and bowed politely.

"You stole the dice, stalked us and *waited*? You should say that you moved around and anticipated us!"

But, Sora's expression as he replied——no, both Shiro and Steph too, their expressions were hard.

They turned their eyes to the billboard——towards the sentence carved on the [Task].

It was the [Task] they *saw countless times* on the way——the sentence hadn't differed in a single word or phrase.

It was then read and echoed through the square that, as far as possible, they didn't want to stop upon——

——[With more than two people, pledge immediately to the Oaths and, in accordance to it, be victorious in a game instructed by someone other than the targets of the task.]

It was this game's most difficult [Task]——and the one they were the most cautious of.

Those [traveling together] and *with more than two people* will absolutely become subject to the task——it's a [Task] that's invalid for anyone but Sora and Shiro.

On top of that——aside from the targets, the conditions also won't get established if the third person(Jibril) isn't present, so it's really an invalid [Task].

Then, Jibril must have abandoned all opportunities of stealing the other dice and pursued them, betting on the one single possibility of Sora and Shiro stopping at her own [Task], something that maybe wouldn't happen even once.

The contents of the [Task] echoed——and together with Jibril's instructions, the scenery started being overwritten.

The space expanded, the terrain wriggled, the sky flowed, and the world on top of the square changed drastically.

"——Well then, Shiro, you've made up your resolution, didn't you……?"

"……Hn……I made it……a long time, ago……"

"This is for real, isn't it……playing a game with Jibril-san……this is a nightmare……"

Sora smiled bitterly while being aware that there was sweat in his forehead, Shiro licked her lips, and Steph was simply looking up to the heavens.

There's no way that something Jibril would go so far to make, would turn up to be just something like a quiz.

——In a place advantageous for herself(Jibril), without any hint, nor support.

————She told Sora and Shiro(her Masters): *"I'll challenge you with everything I have, so show me that you can win."*.

"……Master, did you know?……"

——It was sudden.

"Aside from the gods themselves——there are only two races that, in the past, managed to bring down a Old Deus and perform [Godslaying].

Jibril, who looked like she had made her resolution spoke, little by little.

"Only us, the Flügels——and the ones who slew the Flugels(our) Lord, the Ex-Machinas."

She spilled so indifferently, with her amber eyes gazing emptily at the distance.

Sora and Shiro put more force into their hands as they held each other's——it was blurred with cold sweat.

As they looked without emotion at the appearance of the landscape as it kept getting overwritten, they felt an indescribable——discomfort(anxiety).

"……It has been over six thousand and two hundred years since then——the world has changed."

As Jibril's words continued still emptily, Sora frowned his eyebrows and measured its meaning.

——The [Great War], the [End of the War], [Ten Oaths]——and then on until the [Boardtop World(Disboard)].

Instead of force and violence(war), the world changed so that everything would be decided by power and intelligence(games).

“And now, the masters are trying to perform the third godslaying[58] of history.”

“…………”

“If the world changes every time the gods get surpassed, then——surely, it’ll change once more.”

——Wh, at……is this.

I have an incredibly bad feeling about this, Sora and Shiro’s hands started trembling.

“……However, for me, seeing it thoroughly is——”

Stopping what she was about to say halfway, Jibril shook her head,

“……The prelude became too long. Master, I’ll now tell you——“my instructions(the game)”.

In accordance to all of it, be victorious, it contained such coercive power(task).

A game where they had no right to refuse, and where they *had no choice but to agree* with all of it.

The overwriting of the scenery finished——and, in the middle of a scene that was just like the collapsing of the heavens and earth——Jibril spoke.

“The game is an “strategic simulation game”——reproducing the [Great War].”

With her back turned to the end of the world created by the power of the Old Deus——she continued.

“The Masters, you three shall play as the Immanity……and I as the Flügel——it shall now commence.”

…………Hey. Hey, wait.

“Hey, I was prepared for something of the highest difficult, but isn’t this a bit too much like a devilishly impossible game of all things?”

“…………Jibril……learn, to……hold back……”

*You telling us to win using a certain civ **[59]**bound to [ancient] units against a [modern] unit?*

*Although I once did it with such a binding——against a Flügel, even a [futuristic(Beyond Earth)**[60]**] unit would get evaporated, you know.*

This is quite the impossible task you threw at us, Sora gave a wry smile in amazement.

“The victory condition for both of us is the same——it’s having the opponent’s [capital’s collapse]. And, when that happens——”

But, Sora's smile disappeared from his face at the single sentence that followed.

"The life shall be resigned at the same time as the capital's collapse, and——one will commit suicide(die) on the spot."

——.

"……………………Hey, Jib,ril……you, just what are you say——"

"Each side is free to [resign]. But——[resign] shall be considered as [defeat]."

Sora and the others panted as if they wanted air, but Jibril ignored it and went on indifferently.

"The defeated side shall [transfer] all their dice to the other side, also, in addition for the Master——"

And then, with a gaze sharp like a blade, she continued.

"The *method to win* this game of the Old Deus——I'll have you tell me everything about it, without hiding or adding anything."

——.

"Incidentally, upon start, my number of dice shall return to ten……I demand the transfer of five dice."

——…………..

And then, the dice were transferred, and in the scenery where the heaven burned and the land was dyed in death,

Before the appearance of the star dying that they once saw during the battle at Avant Heim,

Sora thought half-amazed with his head that had almost frozen up.

——*Just whose scenario is this?*

That Jibril would make use of the [Task] and challenge them——that was within the expectations.

But——just what is this.

Being outside the expectations don't even begin covering it——!

"……Well then Master, it doesn't even need to be said but this is the [Great War]——it's undoubtedly *my unrivaled field*[61]."

With the broken world at her back, Jibril spread her wings and spoke.

Ah, this is truly——an unprecedented impossible game, Sora growled in his mind.

The victory condition is the collapse of the opponent's capital——and once it collapses one [commits suicide], you say?

On top of that [resign] is treated as [defeat]……?

Jibril is trying to **force defeat** on [   ](us)?

——*If you win I'll die,* like that?

————Going as far as [threatening] and *using herself as a shield*——!?!?!?

"……Jibril, are you screwing up with me——just what the hell do you think you're doing——huh!?"

Sora, who shouted out so——had a expression that even Shiro, who hadn't left his side for eight years, didn't know of.

I don't get it, Sora yet again roared inside his mind.

She made the preparations this carefully, and it all goes down to [If you want to win then kill me]——!?

"With all due respect, Master, but I did say that this time alone I would be having you let me win."

But contrary to the enraged Sora, Jibril, with her amber eyes that hoarded a cross——

"——I also said *no matter the methods I have to use……*this time alone, I'll have you let me win……"

Being told so with cold, emotionless eyes——Sora lost his words.

And then, letting out a breath……she closed her eyes.

"If that isn't possible, then"……Jibril murmured so in a low voice——

"The second Godslaying. In this game called [Great War]——"

——*I don't understand.*

"Just how would Master move around, survive, and if it's exactly as my guesses, then——just how did you take down a god."

——*I don't understand. I don't understand, I don't get it, Jibril!!*

"Before the world changes once more, I humbly ask of you to let me see that……now then, the pledge……"

*Just what————**Was I wrong about**————!?*

He shouted so in his mind, but the [task]'s coercive power that didn't allow refusal moved his hand and mouth.

Sora, Shiro, and Steph. Along with Jibril, the four of them raised their hands, and opened their mouths.

——This is no good, Jibril.

With those rules, you can't even [resign].

With those conditions, with those rules, even if you resign——

————*Even so at the very least one person will still die*————!!

But Sora's mouth didn't allow him that scream——and together, the mouths of the four of them simply formed a single word.

———— 【Aschente】 ————……

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Similarly——almost at the same time.

In the end of the world, at the summit of the giant chess piece——in the throne of the Sole God.

The creator of the world that could see through everything in the world——the Eastern Union, and the game board in the middle of the air too, everything.

With a book with blank pages and a feathered pen in his hands, he gazed at each one of the opposing parties, and thought.

——In all games, there was an [established tactic].

That was something existing above specifications and rules; it was the [best move] that was logically optimized.

Also——it's something that's destined to be broken, all of it, and in all cases.

——Then, what of its end? For those who desire the end of the unending, *the answer is……**this***.

All the participants of the game and the situations they were facing got projected in the empty air.

Two people faced each other——no, one pillar showed to one person……

——308th square, with 43 squares left until the goal.

"……What's going on……desu……?"

Izuna let out so while standing before the impossible mystery, with two dice in her hand.

From the moment she stepped upon the 301th square until now, she had been seeing endless billboards with the exactly same words.

It was a sequence of [tasks] with the exactly same words and sentence, which she hadn't seen even once until now.

The mystery that was the supposed-to-be inconsistently positioned [tasks] *going on continually so biased like this.*

Not to mention that under normal circumstances, they were supposed to be clearly "invalid" [tasks].

Not to mention that supposedly there shouldn't be anyone able to make it "effective" in that manner.

And finally Izuna, who had stepped into that [task](mystery), was simply being stuck by the countless mysteries.

——*Just whose task is this?*

——*Just whose scenario is this?*

There was something drifting in front of the gaze of Hatsuse Izuna.

Sitting in an ink bottle about the size of her body as she drifted in the air, while supporting her face with her hands as if she had no interest in all creation——the Old Deus(girl).

And countless different scenes that were being projected into empty air as if it was an screen.

It was a group of two and two, who right now faced a game that had no other outcome but the sacrifice of someone.

It was a group of one and three, who right now started a game that had no other outcome but the death of someone.

And then, it was a group of one person and one pillar, who stood before the billboards with the [task] carved.

But seemingly without any interest in Izuna, she declared with an obligatory tone in her voice.

【The illusion seen by the Vessel——*this* is what lies on its end.】

She didn't speak much.

But only the omnipotent(Tet) who could see through everything could hear her silent voice, far beyond the horizon.

The [standard] without sacrifices that Miko dreamed of——*was contradicted from the very start,* she said.

【As long as somebody seek their self-profit and play the best move——such standard shan't be born.】

It was originally an easy game, a game where no one needed to die.

But the end it reached was the images that were being projected——the scenes where they were killing each other, and it didn't even had anything to do with the rules.

The prisoner's dilemma isn't as simple as he(Sora) spoke——it cannot be broken.

If anyone wishes to be the victor instead of the loser, then that symbolization shows the inevitability they'll reach.

——Conduct a [match].

——From the moment the [victory] and [defeat] are separated, it's clear that sacrifice is unavoidable——not to mention.

【It's nonsensical for the Vessel to refuse sacrifices, for it cheated god and sold to thou its [Quintessence].】

Therefore, she hypothesized.

The world has not changed in the slightest, and surely it shan't change for all eternity.

Stealing and killing; the ***names*** *for the excuses and methods can be changed freely.*

【Now, regarding this time's child play attempted by the Vessel: *victory is easy*. Fulfill the tasks and gain everything.】

【However, I shall make the [question] stolen from thy memories, as pledged to the Oaths——】

But, without seemingly to care about Izuna who was standing still.

But, without seemingly to have any expectations about the answer even more so.

【The [question] joked by thou to be proven through this child play——I shall ask once more.】

——*The world has not changed,* there are people who think so.

The truth is: one half is correct, one half is mistaken.

No matter how many thousand times the heavens and earth are remade, the result will be the same as long as the will that weaves the world doesn't change.

For example——in the past of the one who knew that.

In a past older than the Great War, during the age people calls The Creation.

In the cage of creation was all tangible and intangible, living and lifeless, organic and inorganic things, without any will or conscience——then, vaguely.

A concept(Someone) was born in order to question the absurdities, the injustices, and all the feelings contained in everything, in all creation's instead.

In this world, in this planet——the girl had been the first one to ask [why].

With the flow of a endless time, she pilled up an infinite amount of questions, but there was no one who would answer them, so she simply drifted in loneliness.

The girl who was far too ephemeral, who had been betrayed by everything, and kept being deceived by Miko——

【What does believing mean?】

——*[Why], did Miko betray me,* she asked, with eyes that were far too hollow.

It was due to her [Quintessence].

The "God of Skepticism". Because that god was the manifestation of such concept, it didn't believe anything, not even in herself.

The god without a name——not even the [Star Grail] knows it, for even omniscience cannot know something *that doesn't exist.*

——*Just like how Miko chose herself as the sacrifice.*

Just like how the [Quintessence] got used as a shield ***to be forced into a game where she would die if it lost.***

If that's the [believe] defined by Miko, Sora and the others, then.

If deceiving and being deceived, betraying and being betrayed——if that's the [believe] Miko speak of, then.

As if giving up on everything, as if losing everything, even the desires that would be lost, she simply……

While showing only an slight hint of a color that was like a betrayed child criticizing its parents——

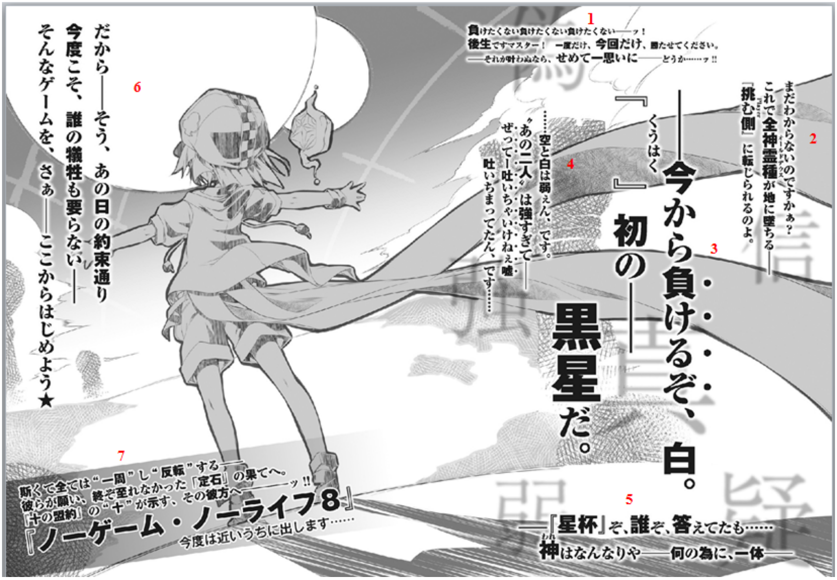
——【From the seven souls seized by the Old Deus, choose one to relinquish(kill), and be teleported to the rising square.】

Above the square with the [task] written so, she pressed Izuna for the answer.
In a situation where nothing can end without someone’s sacrifice——*well then.*

One more person, aside from God(me).
Choose——to decide this [game], who are you going to sacrifice……

Additional Contents(Page Fill)

Bellow is some of the illustrations the author used to fill the remaining pages of the volume.


1
負けたくない負けたくない負けたくない――ッ！
後生ですマスター！　一度だけ、今回だけ、勝たせてください。
――それが叶わぬなら、せめて一思いに――どうか……ッ!!
2
まだわからないのですかぁ？
これで全神霊種（オールドデウス）が地に堕ちる――
「挑む側（Player）」に転じられるのよ。
3
――今から負けるぞ、白。
『』（くうはく）初の――黒星だ。
4
……空と白は弱ぇん、です。
〃あの二人〃は強すぎて――
ぜってー吐いちゃいけねぇ嘘
吐いちまってたん、です……
5
――『星杯』ぞ、誰ぞ、答えてたも……
神（われ）はなんなりや――何の為に、一体――
6
だから――そう、あの日の約束通り
今度こそ、誰の犠牲も要らない――
そんなゲームを、さぁ――ここからはじめよう★
7
斯くて全ては“一周”し“反転”する――
彼らが願い、終ぞ至れなかった「定石」の果てへ。
「十の盟約」の“十”が示す、その彼方へ――ッ!!
『ノーゲーム・ノーライフ8』
今度は近いうちに出します……

1: “I don’t want to lose, I don’t want to lose, I don’t want to lose ——

It’s my once-in-a-lifetime wish, Master! Just once, just this once, please let me win.

——If that isn’t possible, then at least do it resolutely——I beg of you……!!”

2: “You haven’t understood it yet? With this, all Old Deus will fall into earth——

They will turn into [the side that challenges](Player).”

3: “We’ll be losing now, Shiro. It’ll be [ ] (Kuuhaku)’s first ——failure.”

4: “……Sora and Shiro are weak, desu. “Those two” are too strong ——

So they told *a lie they definitely shouldn’t tell*, desu……”

5: “——[Star Grail], someone, please answer me……
What is a God(am I)——just for what purpose——”

6: “That’s why——right, exactly like the promise from that day, this time for sure, without need for anyone to be sacrificed——
Now, let’s start from now on——that kind of game★”

7: Thus, everything “made a turn” and was “inverted”——

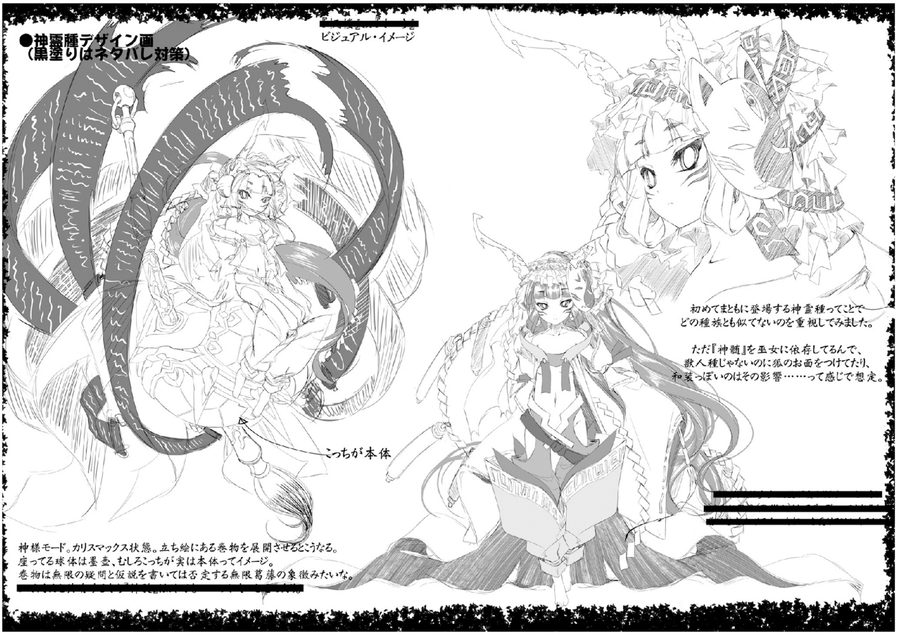
Their wishes went towards the end of the [Standard] that couldn't reach its end.

Beyond what was shown by the "Ten" of the [Ten Oaths] ————!!

[No Game No Life 8]

Coming out soon……

●神霊種デザイン画
（黒塗りはネタバレ対策）



[redacted]
ビジュアル・イメージ

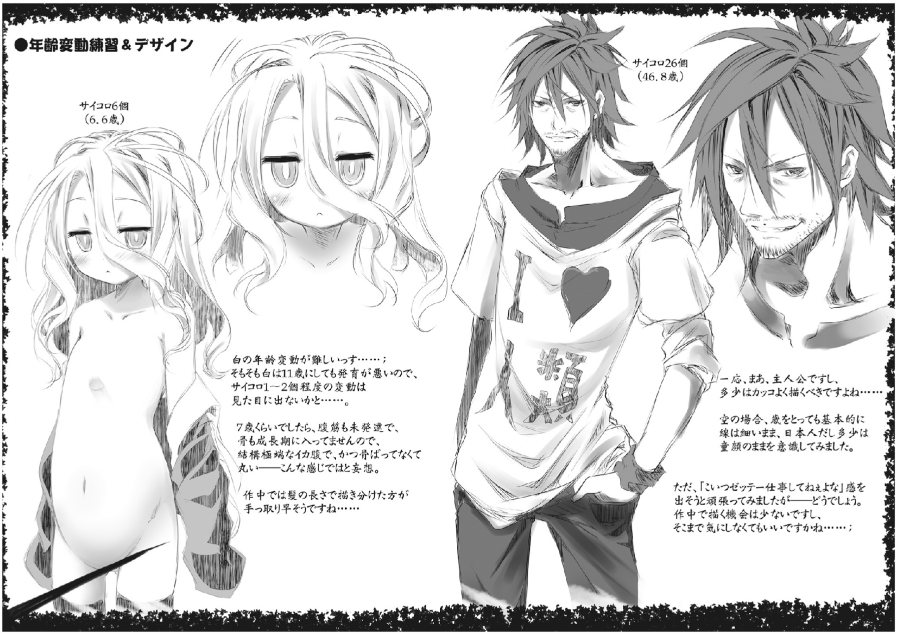
初めてまともに登場する神霊種ってことで
どの種族とも似てないのを重視してみました。

ただ『神髄』を巫女に依存してるんで、
獣人種じゃないのに狐のお面をつけてたり、
和装っぽいのはその影響……って感じで想定。

[redacted]

神様モード。カリスマックス状態。立ち絵にある巻物を展開させるとこうなる。
座ってる球体は墨壺、むしろこっちが実は本体ってイメージ。
巻物は無限の疑問と仮説を書いては否定する無限葛藤の象徴みたいな。
[redacted]

●年齢変動練習＆デザイン



白の年齢変動が難しいっす……；
そもそも白は11歳にしても発育が悪いので、
サイコロ1～2個程度の変動は
見た目に出ないかと……。

7歳くらいでしたら、腹筋も未発達で、
骨も成長期に入ってませんので、
結構極端なイカ腹で、かつ骨ばってなくて
丸い——こんな感じではと妄想。

作中では髪の長さで描き分けた方が
手っ取り早そうですね……

一応、まあ、主人公ですし、
多少はカッコよく描くべきですよね……

空の場合、歳をとっても基本的に
線は細いまま、日本人だし多少は
童顔のままを意識してみました。

ただ、「こいつゼッテー仕事してねぇよな」感を
出そうと頑張ってみましたが——どうでしょう。
作中で描く機会は少ないですし、
そこまで気にしなくてもいいですかね……；

DISCLAIMER

This translation is fan-made, free of charge, and under no circumstances it should be used for any kind of commercial activities or personal gain.

Translator: Fate Scarlet (jCafe24)

Editor/TLcheck: Lil8zngrl (jCafe24)

---

[1] TLC: "Beautiful/Pretty (Girls)" for those unfamiliar with Japanese animation (anime) or comics (manga).

[2] TLC: Sugoroku is a traditional Japanese board game played with dice, like USA's variant, Backgammon, if people know what *that* game is.

[3] TLC: Funnily enough, "Dona, Dona" is a Yiddish theater song about a calf being led to slaughter.

[4] TL: He’s making a reference to a few games, but, the only one I found was the reference to Final Fantasy IX.

[5] TLC: For those that use USA (Imperial) measurements: 131cm = 4’ 3.5748” and 0.48m = 1’ 6.8976”

[6] TLC: 10km = 6.2137mi

[7] TLC: 3,500km = 2,174.79917mi

[8] TL: In the beginning volumes, the continent is introduced as Andalusia, but here it’s written as Lusia.

[9] TL: Vár is a Norse goddess that’s associated with oaths and pledges.
TLC: “Pullum” means *pull* in Icelandic/Scandinavian/Latin, where Norse stemmed from, so the ship’s meaning would be “The Pull of Vár”.
However, in the Japanese text, it’s actually ヴァー・ル・ブルム, which is three separate words having nothing to do with Vár or pulling. Translated directly, it’d be “Va Lu Blum”, completely different, right? Since I can’t tell what it’s supposed to be, I left it as is for now.

[10] TL: JAR〇 is referencing to the Japan Association for Refugees.

[11] TL: It’s a kind of explosive. The official formula is $C_6H_6N_{12}O_{12}$, but, it appears in order of elemental composition in the novel. It’s also called HNIW and CL-20——way easier to remember than that absurd name/formula.

[12] TLC: Dark organic material in soils, produced by decomposition of vegetable/animal matter and essential to earth’s fertility.

[13] TL: Referencing to Biohazard, if readers couldn’t get it.

[14] TLC: USA readers: 380km = 236.121mi.

[15] TL: Paarthurnax is a reference to the RPG, Elder Scrolls.

[16] TL: Siddartha Gautama is the real name of Buddha.

[17] TL: A cartridge-based, arcade system board and home video game console released in 1990. Some of the platform’s popular series included Fatal Fury, King of Fighters and Metal Slug.

[18] TLC: In Japanese, the word used was ガバガバ. It’s an onomatopoetic word to represent a sound of something that’s oversized, or in large quantities, i.e. water *gushing down* the drain. Basically, Ino’s original plan is going down the drain for the reason explained afterwards.

[19] TL: Referring to Japan’s famous pro wrestlers.

[20] TL: “**K**usoge **o**f **T**he **Y**ear”. Kusoge refers to “kuso geemu”, which means “shitty game”.

[21] TL: DT = “doutei”, which means virgin in Japanese.

[22] TL: Complicated joke. It refers to a tag given to a series which the upload of the next episode is late ——for example, it should’ve been uploaded after a week, yet, there’s no sign of it after an entire month. The missing part is a black joke, which is irrelevant to whether the *uploader* really went missing or not. So, it means that *“since the episode is late, Sora still haven’t seen what ‘happened’ to make Steph reach that kind of development.”*

[23] TL: Romancing Saga 3, the sixth title in the SaGa role-playing video game series developed and published by Square (now Square Enix), and released exclusively for the Super Famicom system in Japan.

[24] TL: Harley-Davidson is an American motorcycle manufacturer. Harley is the name given to the motorcycles produced by him.

[25] TL: It’s a kind of combustion engine utilized in Harley’s motorcycles.

[26] TL: Yamato-Damashii (“Japanese spirit”) is a term referring to the spiritual and cultural values of the Japanese people.

[27] TL: Niō or Kongōrikishi are two wrath-filled and muscular guardians standing at the entrance of many Buddhist temples.

[28] TL: The Beatles.

[29] TL: Dragon Quest.

[30] TL: Dragon Quest again.

[31] TL: Eroge refers to Erotic Games (18+ games).

[32] TL: Doujin generally refers to self-published works of magazines, manga and novels. Though it may be done by professionals, it's usually done by amateurs.

[33] TL: 死神 Shinigami — Death God.

[34] TL: R18G: Rated 18 Guro (Grotesque stuff).

[35] TL: Word says "take", kanji says "kill". "Take his balls" or "kill his balls" sounds weird, so I left it as crush.

[36] TL: Arnold Schwarzenegger from the Terminator movies.

[37] TL: The original saying is: "Heaven does not create one man above or below another man." In Japanese, it's separated into two sentences, the first one referring to "above" and the second one to "below". Sora only said the first.

[38] TL: It's a Japanese saying. Simply put, moderation is better.

[39] TL Note: 定石破り破り(*Teigi yaburi yaburi*), lit. "standard breaker breaker".

[40] イチモツ (ichimotsu) - it means cock when written in katakana, but it can also mean "one thing" if written in kanji (一物).

[41] 一物(ichimotsu) - here Sora makes use of the kanji reading of the same word.

[42] TL/N: Both are onomatopoetic words, referring to the act of smiling and sticking out the tongue, respectively. It's a shy smile used in comedies by girls to cover for their mistakes (usually young and cute girls).

[43] TL/N: It's a (Spanish) catchphrase associated with Arnold Schwarzenegger's character title in the movie Terminator 2.

[44] The word used is ずぶずぶ, which is an onomatopoeia that means "to **sink deeply** into something dirty/wrong/bad".

[45] The same expression of command that's used to calm down and/or quieten a horse.

[46] A Japanese proverb (衣食足りて礼節を知る- Isshoku tarite reisetsu wo shiru). Explanation: the poor can't afford manners; only when basic needs for living are met can people spare the effort to be polite.

[47] He speaks here in the third person narrative, just like how Misaka's clones in the To Aru Majutsu no Index series does.

[48] It's a SFX that indicates seriousness.

[49] Reference about the God of the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis driving Adam and Eve off from the Paradise after they ate the Forbidden Fruit.

[50] Reference about Amaterasu from the Japanese Mythology, who secluded herself on the cave Ama-no-Iwato, and came out once the other gods started a festival outside the cave to lure her out.

[51] Not really sure about this one, but it's possibly a reference to Zeus from the Greek Mythology, who is infamous for his many affairs despite being married to Hera.

[52] The word used is a slang term that means either a "person that likes to be alone" or "who has no friends". In this case, it's the latter.

[53] ボッチ力, bocchi-ryoku. In other words, Tet's ability of "not having any friends" is greater than Shiro's.

[54] In other words, searching down for the next person with the highest position who can answer for the country when the Sole Representative is away. Ex: the representative’s second in charge, then the minister, then the governor, and so on.

[55] It’s being used as a SFX, and as a SFX it that has no direct translation. It indicates seriousness in an action. Common examples are: standing up *firmly*, pointing a finger with a *serious* expression, or like in this case, suddenly striking a (serious) pose.

[56] Kanji reads “human sacrifice”.

[57] She speak those two in katakana (English), while “my owners” is in Japanese (我が主様 - that can also be read as “my master/lord”).

[58] Kanji reads “kami oroshi” - bringing down a god - while the furigana reads “kami goroshi” - god killing/slaying.

[59] Civ is the name given to a person who plays civilization games. He means winning against an opponent who uses modern technology using only old/outdated technology.

[60] Beyond Earth refers to technology that goes beyond what we have at Earth. Unearthly, alien, futuristic, intergalactic technology.

[61] 独壇場 - field which one acts unchallenged, unrivaled.